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Biography.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF JOHN CALVIN,

Taken from the *Religious Monitor*, with the addition of several extracts of a communication received from a learned and ingenious Correspondent.

Concluded from page 390.

Castalio renewed his controversy in 1553; but became afterwards so conscious of his errors, and of the injuries which he had done to Calvin, that when on his death-bed, he declared that he could not die in peace if he did not receive his forgiveness. Calvin quickly removed this ground of uneasiness, and soothed his mind with the voice of friendship, and the consolations of the gospel.

We have mentioned, that so early as 1531, or 1532, Michael Servede, or Servetus, began to speculate on the doctrine of the Trinity, and undisguisedly to oppose the orthodox faith. He was a Spanish physician, but left his native country, and settled at Vienne in France, where he acquired great reputation by his professional knowledge and success. But when he applied himself to theology, the ardour of his fancy seduced him into the dangerous path of error; and in the fulness of his zeal, he determined to reveal his discoveries to the world. These he published at Vienne in 1553, in a volume, entitled, *The Restitution of Christianity, in which the knowledge of God, of the Christian faith, of justification, regeneration, baptism, and the eating of the Lord's supper, are perfectly restored.* So unscriptural were the sentiments which it contained, that it was reprobated even by the Papists, who felt so indignant, as to condemn him to be burnt for heresy. He escaped, however, from Vienne, the place of his condemnation and subsequent imprisonment; but the magistrates and clergy executed the sentence on his effigy, and along with it, committed his writings to the flames. Intending to retire to Naples, he travelled by the way of Geneva, where he was apprehended and imprisoned. After a trial, protracted by various causes, a sentence similar to that from which he had so lately escaped, was pass-

ed on him, in consequence of which, he was burnt alive for his heretical opinions.

This tragical history has opened the mouths of many, particularly among the ancient Socinians and the modern Unitarians, against Calvin, whom they accuse of being the principal agent in the whole transaction. It has been repeatedly affirmed, that to gratify a long concealed and inveterate enmity against Servetus, he denounced him to the magistracy of Vienne, as a heretic, and caused him to be apprehended immediately on his arrival at Geneva. It is not our intention to justify the conduct of Calvin in this business; but the following remarks may have the effect at least of so far exculpating him, as to prove, that he was actuated by no private personal motive of malice or cruelty; and that his behaviour throughout can be easily justified on the principles which were at that time commonly received by the mildest, the wisest and the best of men, though to us they now justly appear equally inhuman, unreasonable, and unchristian.

Bolsec, though the author of a life of Calvin, in which every charge that malice could devise, or falsehood propagate, is recorded; and Maimbourg, celebrated for partiality and misrepresentation, never so much as insinuate, that Calvin and Servetus had a mutual hatred of each other; but on the contrary, accuse the latter only, of insolence and pride. That the magistracy of Vienne were not instigated by Calvin to persecute Servetus, may be satisfactorily proved. In a letter to Farel and Viret, with whom he had no secrets, he says, that if Servetus came to Geneva, he would undoubtedly lose his life. This he concluded from his knowledge of the constitution of the state, and the general opinion of the times concerning heresy. On this part of the accusation let us hear his own reasoning: "It is affirmed that I was the cause of Servetus' being apprehended at Vienne. Whence, then, this sudden and powerful intimacy with the satellites of the Pope? Is it credible that there should be such an intercourse between those, who are not less opposed to each other, than Christ is to Belial? Four years have elapsed since Servetus spread a similar report at Venice: whether this was the effect of hatred, or whether he had been deceived by others, I know not. I only ask, if he was betrayed by my information, how was he permitted to live quiet and unmolested, for the space of three years in the very midst of his enemies? They must allow, either that his pretended crime was a falsehood which I invented; or that this holy martyr was in greater favour with the Papists, than to be injured by any accusation of mine."*

But it is farther said, that Calvin, informed that Servetus had escaped from prison at Vienne, made him be seized immediately on his arrival at Geneva. This assertion is not supported by facts: for Servetus must have left Vienne before the 17th of June, that being the day fixed for his death; yet he was not ap-

* Tract. cui titul. *An Christianis judicibus hereticos punire liceat*—Oper. tom. viii. p. 5. 7.

prehended at Geneva till August 13th. It is thus more than probable, that he was five or six weeks, at least, at Geneva, as his safety was every moment endangered while he remained within reach of Popish violence. He besides declined returning to Vienne, when the Council demanded him, preferring the chance of a more lenient sentence from the reformed church. But the principles of toleration were then unknown; even the Protestants retained a portion of the persecuting spirit of Rome; and the constitution of Geneva, in particular, not only permitted, but required the punishment of heretics. So closely connected were the civil and ecclesiastical laws, that sedition and heresy were convertible terms at Geneva. In 1536, accordingly, all who did not submit to the discipline of the church, were subjected to *civil* excommunication, being deprived of their rights of citizenship. In 1558, also, Gentilis escaped death, only by a recantation of his errors.

The sentence denounced against Servetus, was not the effect of momentary heat among the people, or of personal enmity in Calvin, but the result of solemn deliberation, and of the unanimous advice of the reformed churches. In a letter to Farel, Calvin writes thus: "The messenger has returned from the Swiss.—They declare with one consent, that Servetus has renewed those impious errors with which Satan formerly disturbed the church, and that he is a monster not to be endured. The people of Basil are cordial in the matter; those of Zurich are the most vehement, for they strongly express the atrocity of such impieties, and exhort our senate to severity; those of Schaffhausen are of the same opinion. The letter from the ministers of Bern is confirmed by another from the senate, a circumstance which greatly encourages our council. He was condemned without hesitation or controversy. To-morrow he will be brought to punishment. We have attempted to get the *manner* of his death altered, but in vain."* This letter, though written in the full confidence of friendship, contains no appearance either of enmity against Servetus, or of joy at his condemnation; but a simple statement of facts, which prove, that the right of punishing heretics with death was the common sentiment of Christians: and instead of being marked by expressions of cruelty, it rather gives a favourable view of Calvin's mildness. In another letter, this feature is still more apparent. Convinced of the justness of the accusations brought against Servetus, he saw that the law of the state could not be suspended, yet wished the punishment annexed to his crime by the law, to be mitigated.†

"The intolerance, therefore, of the age, not the cruelty of Calvin, (says Sennebier, whose apology for this reformer merits the fuller credit from their being

* Calvini Epistol. p. 72. col. 1. oper. tom. ix.— The letters from the churches of Bazil and Schaffhausen, and from the ministers and senate of Bern, are in the same collection, p. 72—74.

† Spero capitale saltem fore judicium; *pœnæ vero atrocitatem remitti cupio.* Calv. Epist. p. 70. col. 1. oper. tom. ix.

of very different theological sentiments) dictated the sentence, October 27, that Servetus should be burnt alive. Castalio alone had the courage to write a dissertation against the punishment of heretics, which, though he was at Basil, he thought it necessary for his own safety to publish under the feigned name of Bellius. But Servetus persisted to defend his opinions in blasphemous language: the laws of the times could not be violated; and, therefore, the endeavours of some to satisfy themselves with his banishment, and of Calvin to render his punishment less cruel, had no effect. It is certain, Calvin deplored Servetus' fate; and the disputes in prison were managed with much greater moderation on his side, than on that of the pannel. Calvin's situation was peculiarly delicate; Roman Catholics accused him of dangerous theological errors. Their eyes were fixed upon him; and had he remained an indifferent spectator of the process against Servetus, they would have pronounced him a favourer of his opinions. Add to this, had Servetus escaped, his gross and abusive charges against Calvin would have appeared well-founded; and Calvin's adversaries would have availed themselves of that advantage, for ruining his influence."* To conclude, "if the *Roman Catholics* had never put any person to death for the sake of religion, Servetus had never been condemned to die in any *Protestant* city. Let us remember, that Calvin, and all the magistrates of Geneva, in the year 1553, were born and bred up in the church of Rome. This is the best apology that can be made for them."†

After this period, Calvin's life was comparatively quiet and peaceful. The disputes concerning discipline were sometimes indeed revived, and the senate for a season took the power of excommunication into their own hands, but tranquillity was soon again restored. The number of strangers gradually increased in Geneva, and the English who took refuge there, from the persecution of Queen Mary, were allowed to found a church, with their own liturgy and ecclesiastical goverment, as the Italians had done in 1551: but when Elizabeth ascended the throne, and revived the Protestant religion, they thanked the magistrates for their protection, and returned to their own country.

In 1556 Calvin was seized with a quartan ague, which gave a shock to his constitution, already debilitated and worn out with his incessant labours, anxiety, and study, from the effects of which he never wholly recovered: but the flame of life was not yet extinguished, its ardour again revived, and he lived to publish his commentary on Isaiah, and the last edition of his Institutions in French and Latin; and to prepare for the press his annotations on the five books of Moses, containing his ingenious harmony of *the law*. After several years of declining health, during

* Sennebier's Hist. Liter. de Geneve, quoted and abridged by Dr. Erskine.—Sketches of Ch. Hist. Vol. II. No. xi. in which article the substance of the above vindication is to be found.

† Memoirs of Literature, Vol. 1. p. 138.

which he remitted none of those labours which bodily strength allowed him to continue, on the 6th of February, 1564, he preached his last sermon. For ten years together he had abstained from animal food at dinner, as the only certain preventive of violent headachs, to which he had long been subject. When his ague left him, he was seized with the gout in his right limb; then with the cholic, and last of all with the stone. Yet, under this complication of disorders, he never uttered a word expressive of murmuring or impatience; only lifting up his eyes to heaven, he used to say, "How long Lord," an expression to which he was accustomed, when he heard of any calamities befalling the church of Christ. On the 27th of March, he was carried in his chair to the senate, when he presented to them a new rector for the academy; he then uncovered his head, and thanked them for all the kindness they had shown him, particularly in his sickness: "For I feel (said he) this is the last time that I shall come into this place."

On the 2d of April, being Easter-day, he was carried to the church, and received the sacrament from the hands of Beza, his colleague, both in the ministry and the academy. He made his will on the 25th, in which he declared his firm adherence to the doctrine of salvation by the cross of Christ, as the only foundation of all his hopes of pardon and eternal life. "Alas! (says he) my study and my zeal (if worthy of that name) have been so languid and remiss, that I confess innumerable things have been wanting in me to the faithful discharge of my duty; and unless the unmeasurable bounty of God had been present, all my study would have been vain and transient; for which causes I witness and declare, that I hope for no other security of my salvation than this, that seeing God is the Father of mercy, he may shew himself such a Father to me, who acknowledge myself a miserable sinner."

He wished to meet with the senators once more in public; but on account of his state of health, they rather waited on him. He then addressed them in words of gratitude, admonition, and consolation: "Whether your affairs be prosperous or adverse, let this be always before your eyes, that God alone can establish kingdoms and cities, and that he requires mortals to worship him in that character. I exhort the aged not to envy the young, who may have received from the Lord more splendid talents than themselves; and the young I warn against vanity and pride, beseeching them to be modest in their behaviour." Afterwards, he set before them the great danger of error in doctrine, as leading to corruptions in practice; and concluded with a solemn prayer for every blessing that might promote their individual happiness, and the best interests of the commonwealth. They departed in tears, as from a last interview with their common father.

On the 28th, he spoke to the ministers of Geneva, of the grace which he had received to be faithful in his trust; encouraged them to stand fast in the same grace, and bade them farewel, with many tears and fervent prayers to

God in their behalf. Being informed that his old friend and fellow-labourer, Farel, though sickly, was on his way, from Neufchatel, to see him before his death, he thus wrote to him: "Farewel, my best, and most upright brother; since God is pleased to continue you longer in the world than me, live mindful of our connexion, which was profitable to the church of God, and the fruit of which is awaiting us in heaven. I would not, that you would fatigue yourself for my sake. I with difficulty *breathe*, and daily expect that my respiration will cease. It is enough that I live and die to Christ, who is gain to his own, both in life and death; again farewel. May 11, 1564.

Farel, however, accomplished his journey, saw Calvin, renewed with him that friendship which even death cannot dissolve, but which will be cemented with the perfection of bliss in the heavenly world, and returned again to Neufchatel. After this, Calvin spent his remaining days almost wholly in prayer, which his difficulty in breathing prevented from being articulate; but the frequent elevation of his eyes, and the serenity of his countenance bespoke the comfort of his mind, and the solemnity of his employment. He was sometimes heard to use the words of David, "Lord, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it:" and of Isaiah, "I did mourn as a dove." Once also he was heard to say, "Lord, thy hand is heavy on me, but I am abundantly satisfied because it is *thy* hand." He continued in life till the 27th of May, towards the evening of which day, he quietly breathed out his spirit into the hands of his Saviour and his God.

Thus lived, and thus died, John Calvin, justly styled, the terror of Rome, and the apostle, not of Geneva only, but of the reformed churches. The day following his death, the whole city was in the deepest affliction. Every one lamented over their illustrious citizen; the church deplored the decease of their faithful pastor; the academy mourned the loss of their renowned teacher; in a word, all wept at being deprived of him, whom, next to God, they regarded as their common parent and benefactor. His body was attended to the grave, by the senators, the ministers, the professors, the students, and almost the whole city; and laid in a common cemetry, without any extraordinary pomp, or parade. According to his own request, no monument was erected to his memory: a plain stone only, without any inscription, was laid on his grave. This called forth a few verses from Beza, of which the following are a translation; and which, though not free from the partiality of friendship, are worthy to be preserved.

Why in this humble and unnotic'd tomb
Is Calvin laid, the dread of falling Rome,
Mourn'd by the good, and by the wicked fear'd,
By all who knew his excellence rever'd;
From whom ev'n virtue's self might virtue learn,
And young and old its value may discern?
'Twas Modesty, his constant friend on earth,
That rais'd this grave, unsculptur'd with a name;
Happy the grassy spot that marks his worth,
More lasting far than marble is thy fame!

Calvin's stature was of the middle size, his complexion dark, his eye bright and penetrating. His dress was plain without being mean; his diet simple and sparing. But his mind was what distinguished him from the bulk of mankind. His original talents were great, and his progressive acquirements astonishing. His mind was acute, and discerned almost intuitively, the connexions of reasoning, and the relation of one subject to another. His judgment was solid and perspicacious; his memory at once quick and retentive. His learning was so extensive and profound, that even Scaliger, whose parsimony of praise is well known, affirmed, that he was not only one of the most exalted characters that the world had seen since the days of the apostles, but that at the age of twenty-two, he was the most learned man in Europe. His ardour was invincible, and though he, perhaps, discovered less courage in his conduct than Luther, he was equally bold in his writings. His temper was naturally irritable, and it must be acknowledged, that it sometimes hurried him into intemperance of language. But, as he advanced in life, grace asserted its power over nature, and rendered him comparatively gentle and forbearing. Of this we have a remarkable proof, in his expressions concerning Luther, who had called him by many strong and unbecoming names, on account of his rejecting the doctrine of consubstantiation: "If Luther should even call me *a devil*, so much do I revere him, that I should always own him to be *an illustrious servant of God**." He has been accused of ambition. Yes, says Beza, and he aimed at establishing a new papacy, for he preferred this manner of life, this republic, and in fine, this church, which may be well called a warehouse of poverty, to every other situation and place. He laboured to accumulate wealth. Yes! for his whole effects, notwithstanding his library was sold very dear, scarce amounted to 300 crowns, so that his own words may be justly used: "If I cannot in my lifetime persuade some people, that I am not avaricious, *my death* will convince them."† The senate could testify, that though his salary was very small, he was so far from being dissatisfied with it, that he persisted in refusing to have it increased. His love to the truth was invincible; his diligence in acquiring it unabated by public duty, or private distress; his anxiety to make it known to others was discovered when bodily strength had failed him, and ceased only with the spark of life. In his sermons and speeches, his manner was grave and commanding; he addressed the understanding of his audience more than their affections, and convinced them by the power of reasoning, rather than by the graces of persuasion. When Farel spoke, it was, like thunder, rousing, awful, overpowering: Viret, like Nestor, was calm, and gently persuasive: Calvin uttered sentences in almost as many words, such was the strength and terseness of his language. Like a true ser-

* Epist. ad Bullinger. Op. tom. ix. p. 239. col. 2.

† Prefat. ad Comment. in Psalmos, Oper. tom. iii.

vant of God, and a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, he devoted all these talents, natural and acquired, all his time, and all his strength, to him from whom he received them. His life was a continued act of labour to himself, but of service to the church, of exertion for the glory of God and the honour of the Saviour, and of benevolence and zeal for the salvation of men. Like Paul, he counted not his life dear, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Now he rests from his labours, and his works do follow him. His writings are a treasure of theological discussion; his life was an illustration of the doctrines which he preached, and an example to all, of Christian conduct; and his death was a proof of the efficacy of the salvation for which he hoped, in the full possession of which he now rejoices in the presence of the Lord.

Reader, whatever be thy talents, thy condition, thy occupation, or thy enjoyments; if thou wouldst die like Calvin, animated with the hope of glory, thou must build on the same foundation, and, like him, transfuse the precepts of the gospel into thy temper and conduct. Be therefore a follower of them, who, though faith and patience inherit the promises.

N. B. In the preceding narrative, where particular authorities are not mentioned, Beza's life of Calvin, prefixed to his works, furnishes the statement of facts.

Religious Communications.

ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF MEN FOR THEIR FAITH.

By those, who acknowledge the gospel to be a divine revelation, it will be admitted, that this revelation contains great and interesting truths respecting a dispensation of grace to mankind in their fallen state; the provision of a Saviour, and the appointment of a method for their obtaining salvation. Here then a question arises, Are men at liberty to believe or disbelieve these truths? To receive or reject them? This might be thought a singular question, were there not evident occasion given for it by sentiments, which we often hear expressed and advocated, from which it is to be feared, that many practise both on themselves and others dangerous and fatal deceptions. How often is it said to be very immaterial what a man believes concerning one doctrine or another; and a liberality of sentiment towards those, who differ from us in doctrinal matters is, by some, considered as one of the fairest traits in a Christian character. It will readily be conceded, that one man has no right to prescribe to another; that, as it regards his fellow-creatures, every man has a right to think and judge for himself;

and that liberality and charity to a certain extent are to be exercised toward those, whose sentiments differ from our own. But, when the question is asked, Are men at liberty to believe or disbelieve the truths contained in divine revelation; the inquiry is, have they such liberty from the Author of this revelation? When God has made known certain truths respecting the person whom he has appointed to be the Saviour of mankind, the method by which salvation was procured, and the way in which sinners may obtain salvation; has he at the same time given men liberty to believe, or not to believe these truths? Surely it will not be pretended, that men are at liberty to disbelieve the whole of those truths. This would entirely frustrate the design of revelation, which can be no other, than that the truths which God has made known to men, be received and regarded according to their meaning and intention; and if men are at liberty to disbelieve the whole of the truths contained in divine revelation, they are not to be blamed for using this liberty; they may do it with impunity.

It may then be presumed, that no one, who is a believer in divine revelation, will assert a right to disbelieve the whole of its truths. Are any then at liberty to disbelieve a part of those truths? to make a selection and to determine, each one for himself, such and such truths I admit, others I reject? Does not this take away and destroy all due reverence for divine revelation? Is it not assuming a freedom with the truths of God, which is most unbecoming and criminal? On supposition, that men are at liberty to disbelieve a part of the truths contained in divine revelation, it may be asked, what part? Are they not all parts of one great system, and sanctioned by the same authority? Is it not then the duty of men, are they not under solemn obligations to attend to them, and to receive them as a whole; indiscriminately, as thus sanctioned? It must indeed be acknowledged, that all men are not equally capable of understanding and receiving every revealed truth; but according to their capacity must be their obligation. With regard to the great, essential, and most important truths of revelation; those truths, on a cordial belief of which our salvation depends; with such plainness and perspicuity are these truths exhibited and declared, that, if men do not receive them, it cannot be owing to want of capacity; it must be from some other cause; from a *temper of heart*, which will render them objects of just condemnation.

But let us consider the accountability of men for their faith, with reference to a particular object: I mean our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Are men at liberty here to believe, or disbelieve just as they find themselves disposed; just as their predominant inclinations may lead them? Are they under no obligation as to their receiving or rejecting the report of the gospel concerning him? And will they be equally benefitted at last, whether they do in reality receive or reject this report? The testimony of the gospel, concerning

Jesus Christ is certainly but one. It is not various, as different men, to serve their own favourite schemes and purposes, have represented it. It is but one with respect to his person, to his undertaking, as the Redeemer of mankind; and as to what he suffered, and accomplished in that capacity. If this report then is made in a manner sufficiently clear and intelligible, (and who will say it is not?) are not men consequently under indispensable obligations to receive it? To receive it, as by the divine word, in its natural, obvious meaning, it is addressed to them.

Farther, let it be considered, that believing in Jesus Christ is enjoined upon men by express command. "This is his commandment," says the apostle John, "that ye believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ." This, from numerous passages, and from the whole current of the sacred writings, appears to be the great requisition of the gospel. Men, therefore, who are made acquainted with the gospel, most assuredly are accountable for their believing, or not believing on the name of Jesus Christ. And, as the fullest evidence on this point, let it be observed, this requisition has annexed to it the most solemn sanctions. "He, that believeth on the Son of God, hath everlasting life; and he, that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Should not then every one be solicitous to know, what this believing is? What is its true meaning and import? The best and only sure way of obtaining the proper information, relative to this momentous concern, is by consulting the word of God, by attending to the descriptions given of Jesus Christ, and the representations made concerning him in the sacred scriptures. He is there called IMMANUEL, God with us. He is declared to be the Mediator between God and man. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Under these names and characters, he is represented, as assuming our nature, and subjecting himself to the divine law in our behalf, to fulfil its requirements, and as suffering its penalties for the purpose of our redemption. He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them, that were under the law. "He, who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion, as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In his mediatorial capacity "he fulfilled all righteousness, and suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He was made sin for us," a sacrifice of atonement for sin, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He made peace by the blood of his cross." So that "in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins:" and "in him God is reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and sinners are "justi-

fied freely by the grace of God, through the redemption, that is in Christ."

If with simplicity of mind, and a real desire to know and understand the truth, men would attend to these descriptions of Jesus Christ, and the plain representations of the word of God concerning him; they might, it should seem, fairly satisfy themselves as to what is meant by believing on his name. That it can intend no other, than believing him to be the Son of God in a sense, in which no creature is, or can be; as partaking of the same divine nature with the Father; and in the genuine meaning of the term, as the Saviour of sinners, through whose mediation, humiliation, obedience, sufferings, and death in his human nature, full atonement was made for sin; pardon and complete salvation were procured; and also that believing in Jesus Christ, in its full import, must intend a receiving, regarding, and trusting in him in the characters he sustains, as he is in those characters an object worthy of esteem, affection, and confidence. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them, that believe on his name." If this be the true import of believing in Jesus Christ; if this be that believing on him, which involves a compliance with the requisitions of the gospel; this then is the faith for which men are accountable, and by which their destiny in another world is to be determined.

Let every one inquire for himself; and under the impression of his accountability to God for believing or not believing the revealed truths of his word; for believing or not believing on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. Under this impression, let him read and study the divine word; and let his sincere endeavours to know the truth be accompanied with humble supplications for the teaching and the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit. None teacheth like him. Let him especially, and above all things, be concerned to know, what is implied in believing in Jesus Christ, and that there may be in his heart a full compliance with this requirement.

CHRISTIANUS.

ON THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

WHEN any proposal is made for public consideration, it evidently concerns those, to whom the proposal is made, to understand the measures contemplated, and the probable result.

It is well known, that many respectable ministers of the gospel, in Massachusetts, have, for some time, been earnestly engaged to form a *General Association;* the object of which is to produce union of sentiment and of procedure. "In many instances," it is said, "those Christian teachers, who are united in the love of divine truth, and fervently engaged in the cause of the Redeemer, are estranged from each other in affection, and filled with mutual prejudices."

Though there is supposed to exist a general sameness of belief, and a general union as to the great object of pursuit, there are points of less moment, in theology, in which they differ.

It cannot be denied, that this is the true state of things, nor can any thing be more desirable, than that greater union should exist among those, who highly value the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; and, that in consequence of this union, they should be able more effectually to discountenance that lax theology, which leaves nothing between the gospel and ethnic morality, but a line extremely indistinct and ill defined.

An object may be highly valuable, but the means be ill adapted to its accomplishment. That this is the case in the present instance, the writer would not be too positive; he only wishes fairly to propose such objections as occur to his mind.

Let it be inquired, whom the contemplated *Association* is to embrace.

Is it to be confined to men, who, on subjects of divinity, perfectly coincide in judgment? No, it is to comprehend gospel ministers, who do not perfectly agree in sentiment. It is to consist of those, who, though they may be earnest to defend their own peculiar sentiments by fair reasoning, do yet prefer the whole of Christianity before a part, and are careful not to hinder the common cause:—peace makers, who regret and abhor that conceit of unquiet spirits, that the interest of religion depends wholly on those opinions, which distinguish them from others.

Perhaps there is not a minister in this state, who would not profess to be charmed with this language. But is the General Association to comprehend all the Massachusetts clergy? By no means. That would be utterly inconsistent with the design, which is to produce a coalition among such as retain evangelical principles. As all, who profess their belief in revealed religion, consider their own sentiments as evangelical, by what standard shall the discrimination be made? This question admits a ready answer. They, who laid the foundation of the proposed union, have voted, "that the doctrines of Christianity, as they are generally expressed in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, be admitted as articles of faith, and as the basis of union." It is not supposed, that all, who subscribe to this Catechism, think alike on all subjects of theology. Perfect union of sentiment is not the *sine qua non* of this coalition. As this is not required in order to subscription, so neither is it required of those, who have subscribed. It must then be clearly understood, that though we subscribe to the same catechism, we are not bound to explain this catechism in the same manner, nor to understand it in the same sense. The doctrines of Christianity, as *generally* expressed in the catechism, are to be the basis of union.

What may be comprehended under this term, *generally*, it will be difficulty to define; and while this remains undetermined, the language of subscription cannot be understood, i. e. it cannot be fully understood, what a man's sentiments are, from the circumstance of his subscribing to the catechism.

If those gentlemen who are most engaged to promote the General Association could themselves subscribe to the literal and obvious meaning of the cate-

chism, yet, as the avowed object is to bring together in one harmonious body, persons fundamentally right, though some of them may be partially incorrect, it would still be a matter of extreme difficulty to determine how great a latitude might be allowable:—how different a person's opinion might be from the literal import of the language, and yet subscribe that language, with a good conscience. But nothing can be more certain than that many gentlemen, who most warmly advocate the measure, must subscribe to the catechism, if they subscribe at all, in a sense very different from what the language imports.

The catechism asserts, that "the covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression." Now, it is the belief of many persons engaged to promote the contemplated coalition, not that the posterity of Adam either "sinned in him, or fell with him," but are answerable for their actual transgressions, and theirs only: though they suppose that their actual transgressions take place in consequence of his sin.

A latitude allowable to one man, is, doubtless, allowable to another.

The catechism assures us that "the sinfulness of that estate, whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions, which proceed from it."

The corruption of man's nature, is, indeed, acknowledged by the gentlemen, of whom we are speaking; but they do not believe that the sinfulness of man's fallen estate consists in the *guilt of Adam's sin;* of course, when they subscribe to this article, it must be with very great latitude.

Again; it is the opinion of many, who advocate the measure proposed, that the divine efficiency is as necessary to produce evil as good; that Adam no more sinned by his own strength, than the sinner repents and turns to God by his own strength; that it was as much a divine power, which produced an evil heart in Adam, as it is a divine power, which produces a good heart in the regenerate. Why should these persons be required to subscribe such a sentence as this: "Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate in which they were created by sinning against God." Surely, they would not think it correct to say, "that the sinner, being left to the freedom of his own will, turns from the state in which he was created by repentance towards God." If they think the latter an erroneous expression, or calculated to make a wrong impression, they must think the same of the former. Why should they be required to subscribe to an expression, which they believe calculated to produce error?

If one person subscribe with such latitude, why may not another? What union then will subscription produce? It is

well known that subscription to the Bible does not produce union of sentiment. The Bible is subscribed by Trinitarians, Calvinists, Arminians and Unitarians; how does this happen? They understand the Bible differently. One denomination supposes, that it substantiates their sentiments; another, that it upholds theirs. Will this not be the case with those, who subscribe the Shorter Catechism? It is answered in the negative, because the language of the catechism is more definite than that of scripture. Be it so; and suppose, further, that all, who shall associate on the proposed plan, understand the catechism in the same sense, yet if they subscribe, not as they suppose the authors meant, but as they suppose the authors ought to have meant, I ask again, where is the union? For doubtless, all persons would not think alike, as to what ought to have been the meaning of the Westminster Assembly. Is it not clearly absurd to speak of an union to be produced by subscribing to a confession, if it be understood, in the outset, that we may subscribe in what sense we please? But it may be replied, that the supposition here made does not accord with truth. It is by no means understood, that persons are to be admitted into this association unless they believe the catechism *in substance*. I reply, that the substance of the catechism is a term extremely vague. Persons, who were strongly opposed to many expressions in the catechism, might think it not inconsistent with uprightness, to subscribe it generally, or in substance. Almost all men believe that it contains much more truth than error; may a man safely subscribe it on that account? Some, no doubt, would be of this opinion; and might subscribe, though Unitarians: others would think, that they ought not to subscribe, if, in their apprehension, it contained the least error.

The thirty nine articles of the English church are Calvinistic. Is it so with the clergy? Are they Calvinistic? A great majority of them are, and have been notoriously otherwise. The minority subscribe and preach according to the true spirit of the articles: the others subscribe *generally*, or in *substance*, or with mental reservation, or they subscribe to what they wish the articles were.

Again, the kirk of Scotland make the doctrines of Christianity, as generally explained in the Assembly's Catechism, the basis of their union. But are they united in sentiment? and none but Calvinists among them? The contrary is undeniable. Surely those, who feel most interest in this coalition do not design, like king James I. to prevent the discussion of those points in theology, which are most often disputed. Let it be supposed then, that A and B subscribe the catechism. The former holding the sentiments of Dr. Hopkins, the other of Dr. Doddridge. They both, in each other's presence, preach their respective sentiments. Will A feel at all more agreeably, at hearing his own sentiments controverted and condemned by B, because they have made the same confession of faith, than by another person? Will not the

audience perceive that their union consists in words, not in faith? Will it not be perceived that while A subscribed a catechism, teaching such particular doctrines, the other subscribed a catechism, the doctrines of which were very different? Here then will be at least two parties in this harmonious association just as far apart as before, the one desiring that his sentiments may prevail, to the suppression or extermination of contrary sentiments; the other as cordially reciprocating the same desire.

But, says an advocate for the measure contemplated, let both be prudent, and cautiously guard against mutual offence. Whereunto they have already attained, let them walk by the same rule; let them mind the same things. So says the writer; but pray why may they not do this without subscribing the catechism? Why may they not, at present, converse freely together, see where they agree, and where they differ, unite in supporting what they both deem important, and to oppose what both unite in condemning? Why may not this be done without professing a creed, which, it is extremely possible, neither subscribes, in the sense of its original framers? The English clergy have, it is well known, brought much reproach on themselves, by their readiness to subscribe articles, which, in their most obvious sense, they do not believe. It is not easy to see why others who imitate them should not partake in the same reproach. Whatever injury is done to the cause of uprightness and true religion, in the one case, may be done in the other.

Another inconvenience likely to attend on the contemplated association is, its being conducive to a wrong estimate of clerical character. The catechism will, in the use proposed, be a standard of orthodoxy. People will be led to view those, who subscribe, as orthodox; all who refuse to subscribe, heterodox.

Here are two men, let it be supposed, whose theological sentiments perfectly coincide. Both view the catechism as a remarkably succinct and well digested summary of the Christian faith. Both believe in man's hereditary depravity; but do not believe that the posterity of Adam either sinned *in him*, or fell *with him*. But though agreed in divinity, they are not agreed in every point of Christian casuistry. One supposes, that, taking all things into consideration, he may safely subscribe. He does it, and is reputed sound in the faith. The other, whose faith is precisely the same, judging differently as a casuist, does not subscribe; of course, he is reputed a person of corrupt sentiments. His reputation suffers, and his usefulness is diminished.

These thoughts are suggested for the consideration of the candid and pious. If they have no weight, or be counterbalanced by those, which have more, the writer cordially hopes, that the contemplated coalition will be formed. On the other hand, if the reasoning be just, the sincere friends of Zion will not despise it.

But what, interrogates the reader, shall be done? Are the peculiar doctrines of Christianity to be given up, or viewed with indifference? Is it of no concernment, whether we preach the eth-

ics of Epictetus, or the gospel of Messiah? And should we not contend, with a Christian temper, for the Christian faith?

The writer humbly proposes the following measures.

1. Let those ministers who believe that men are in a state, from which they need to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, endeavour to cultivate a friendly intercourse.

2. Let them collect the most important points, on which they do agree, and unite for the defence of them.

3. Let them consider the threatening errors, which they both condemn, and unite to oppose them.

4. Though they should not pretend union of sentiment, where it does not exist, let them not magnify the points of disagreement.

5. Let them agree not to act in the ordination of a candidate, unless liberty be granted to examine his qualifications.

To these, let there be added humble prayer, a mild temper towards all men, and increased zeal in the discharge of ministerial duty. J.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING COMMUNICATION.

In the view of the Editors, the plan of the GENERAL ASSOCIATION is favourable to the interest of religion. It has, therefore, received their decided approbation, and their cordial and zealous patronage. It can, they believe, be defended on principles, which result from scripture, from sound reason, and from the experience of ages. Their reluctance to publish the preceding communication has not arisen from want of respect for the talents of their Correspondent, nor, on the other hand, from a fear of meeting his objections in the most public manner. They would not become advocates of a measure which, in their apprehension, would suffer by fair, open investigation. The delay of the publication has proceeded from their unwillingness to occupy the attention of their readers with arguments, which, though specious, are not weighty, and which, in their serious judgment, tend rather to perplex, than to enlighten the mind. They have further considered how easy it frequently is, by a few sentences, to entangle a subject with puzzling difficulties, and to inwrap it in obscurity; and how much attention and labour are sometimes necessary to free it from such entanglements and obscurity, and to place it clearly in the light of truth. This consideration, which has increased their backwardness to publish the foregoing performance, must be received, as an apology for the length of their reply.

But in attempting a just reply to the communication of J, it is by no means necessary to prove, that his objections are wholly without foundation. We never indulged the expectation, that the plan of the General Association would occasion no undesirable consequences; nor are we disposed to say that the evils, which our Correspondent has mentioned, if they should follow, are worthy of no regard. It is to be remembered, that no scheme, though devised by the most consummate wisdom, and

calculated to yield the greatest advantage to the public, can be proposed, against which a fertile imagination and a subtle understanding cannot urge very plausible arguments. What plan of extensive utility to mankind has ever been brought forward, the accomplishment of which has not been hindered by a host of objections. If our finding men, who will object and oppose, be considered a serious discouragement, we must relinquish every great and good work, and despair of ever attaining the object, to which Christian benevolence is devoted.

No important measures for the public good have ever been adopted and pursued, which have not been attended with difficulties, and followed by some real evils. The medical art, though it has been a blessing to the world, has been the occasion of destroying the health and hastening the dissolution of many individuals. There is no civil law or constitution, though most wisely framed, and founded on the most rigid principles of public justice, which may not, in some real or supposeable case, open the door for a degree of injustice to particular persons. The most important improvements in the arts and sciences, and the most pious and successful plans for the reformation and everlasting welfare of mankind have occasioned partial disadvantage and injury. But what reasonable man ever thinks of urging an accidental, partial evil, which may possibly take place, as a decisive argument against a project, which promises a vast overbalance of advantage? How generally is it the case, that our judgment and practice are determined in favour of a proposed plan, not by the prospect of avoiding every evil, but by the balance of expected good? Here, we apprehend, is the great mistake of our respected correspondent. He appears too much impressed with the few possible inconveniences, which may attend the plan of the General Association, and too little, with the immense good, which it is likely to promote. Even if all the evils, which have occurred to his imagination, could be certainly predicted, those evils would, in our apprehension, be lost in the evident advantages of the General Association. These advantages have been briefly mentioned in a former number of the Panoplist, and need not be repeated. See Pan. Vol. II. p. 504.*

Upon the supposition, that the evils apprehended should actually take place, it is still an important question, whether they would arise from any impropriety or defect in the plan of the General Association, or from some other cause. That plan ought not to be charged with evils, which spring from the ignorance, the weakness, or the errors of men. Readers will remember that the plan proposed is simply this; namely, that the Congregational ministers in this commonwealth, who embrace the doctrines of the reformation, shall meet together once a year, to deliberate on the concerns of religion, and to devise and adopt

* The reader is requested to refresh his mind with the No. referred to.

measures for promoting the cause of Zion, receiving, as articles of their faith, and as the basis of their union, the principles of Christianity as they are generally expressed in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. Is not such a plan perfectly consistent with our religious liberty, and with all our rights and duties as men, and as Christians? Is it not eminently adapted, particularly at the present time, to yield extensive good to the churches? If so, what have we to do with a few evils, which may possibly attend the execution of it, or be occasioned by it? Especially when we consider that the evils feared cannot be produced by any thing exceptionable in the plan, and, therefore, cannot be pleaded as an argument against it, any more than the *fire*, which Christ declared *he came to kindle on earth*, was to be charged to any thing malignant or hurtful in the nature of Christianity. Suppose the heterodoxy, the prejudice, or the needless scrupulosity of some men exclude them from the General Association. Is this a reason why others should reject the scheme, and deprive themselves and the churches of important advantages within their reach?

Thus far we have admitted, that the inconveniences attending the General Association may be as numerous and great, as J. imagines. Now even upon this supposition, we consider the inconveniences so small, in comparison with the probable advantages, as to furnish no solid argument against the scheme under consideration. But let us inquire what are the inconveniences and difficulties in the way? What are the evils, which have filled the apprehension of our correspondent? Let his reasoning be carefully examined.

His great difficulty respects the creed, which is received as the basis of union. "It is not supposed, (he says) that all, who subcribe to this Catechism, think alike on all subjects of theology. Perfect union of sentiment is not the *sine qua non* of this coalition. As this is not required in order to subscription, so neither is it required of those, who have subscribed. It must then be clearly understood, that though we subscribe to the same Catechism, we are not bound to explain this Catechism in the same manner, nor to understand it in the same sense." But this is not correct reasoning. For although "it is not supposed, that all, who subscribe the Catechism, think alike on *all subjects of theology;*" it may be supposed, that they think alike on those particular subjects, which are introduced into the Catechism. Although "perfect union of sentiment" is not expected of those who join the Association; yet it may be expected that they will agree in understanding and explaining their creed, according to *the plain, honest language of subscription.* The most that can be clearly inferred from this language is, that subscribers are not bound to understand and explain the Catechism, *in every particular article, or word,* in precisely the same sense. J's mistake is, that he has made this inference too extensive.

He thinks it difficult to define what is comprehended under the

term, *generally*, and that, "while that is undefined, the language of subscription cannot be understood; that is, it cannot be clearly understood what a man's sentiments are, from the circumstance of his subscribing to the Catechism." We allow that, from a man's subscribing the Catechism in the manner abovementioned, it cannot be fully understood what his sentiments are *on all subjects, and in all respects.* But if he duly understand the principles of Christianity and the proper use of words, and mean to make a fair and honest declaration of his sentiments, his professing to receive the principles of Christianity, *as they are generally expressed* in the Catechism, clearly determines what is *the general scheme* of his sentiments. The Catechism is designed to exhibit the great outlines, or the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. These principles, in almost every instance, are expressed in unequivocal and perspicuous language, and in a connected, systematic form. No man, therefore, of tolerable information, can honestly declare, that he receives the Catechism, *generally*, unless he believe the great evangelical principles upon which it is constructed, and, indeed, of which it consists. And as this is the case, such a declaration may be easily understood. If a man, of whose knowledge and veracity we have satisfactory proof, declare to us, that he receives the principles of natural philosophy according to the *general scheme* of Newton, or as they are *generally* expressed in his writings; we are at no less about his meaning. He receives *the great system of the Newtonian philosophy*, and rejects every thing inconsistent with it; or, in other words, he receives the Newtonian philosophy *in its grand, discriminating principles;* though as to the mode and result of some experiment or observation, and in some instances, as to the particular method of proof, he may not perfectly agree with Newton. If a man say, "I believe the *general principles* of Berkley's system;" we understand that he believes Berkley's system in its grand peculiarities, or distinguishing principles; although in some explanations and minor points, which affect not the general system, he may differ from Berkley. So if a divine say, "I believe the principles of religion as they are generally exhibited in the writings of Calvin, Witsius, Stapfer, Owen, and Edwards;" if another say, "I believe the general system of Arminius and Whitby;" and another; "I believe the principles of religion, as they are generally contained in the writings of Socinus and Priestley;" it is not difficult to understand them. We conclude the honest meaning of each to be, that he embraces the peculiar principles, which constitute the system of his favourite authors, and which distinguish it from all other systems. Accordingly, we may justly denominate him *a Calvinist, an Arminian, or a Socinian;* although, in some minor, unessential points, he does not exactly agree with Calvin, Arminius, or Socinus. It is not proper, that we should here undertake to show, what are the fundamental and essential principles of each of these systems. We refer it to

every well informed, discriminating divine, who can as clearly distinguish the prime, constituent, essential principles of each religious system from points of minor consequence, as the philosopher can distinguish the prime, essential principles of the Newtonian system, from those points, which may be determined either way without affecting the system.

The length of these remarks will need no apology, when the object is duly attended to. We are willing to seize this opportunity to show the propriety, the fairness, and the honesty of expressing our assent to the Catechism in the manner above mentioned; and thus to remove a principal objection, in the mind of our correspondent and some others, against the General Association. If this plan of subscription be liable to abuse, and leave the door open for imposition; the fault may not be charged against the plan itself, but against the deceit and wickedness of the human heart. Although we would surround Zion with as many safeguards as possible; yet it would be romantic to expect, that we can divest erroneous and dishonest men of all power to practise imposition, and introduce disorder and mischief. It is sufficient for our present purpose, if we can make it clearly appear, that the scheme we are defending is calculated to promote the union, the improvement, and the influence of orthodox and pious ministers, and through them the welfare of the churches.

But J. has further objections. "If those gentlemen, who are most engaged to promote the General Association, could themselves subscribe to the literal and obvious meaning of the Catechism; yet, as the avowed object is to bring together in one harmonious body, persons fundamentally right, though some of them may be partially incorrect, it would still be a matter of extreme difficulty to determine how great a latitude might be allowable; how different a person's opinion might be from the literal import of the language, and yet subscribe that language with a good conscience." Would our correspondent call in question the importance of general rules? Or would he consider the difficulty, in certain cases, of applying those rules, as overbalancing the immense good, which they produce? The extreme difficulty abovementioned is found, in most cases, where general rules are concerned. Instances might easily be multiplied, were it necessary. The caution and timidity of our correspondent might lead to consequences of which he is not aware.

Here, again, we have proceeded upon the candid concession, that J. has not overrated the difficulty under consideration. But it might, with good reason, be argued, that the difficulty will, in all probability, occur very rarely, and when it does occur, will be so inconsiderable, as to deserve little serious regard. Take into view those ministers of the gospel in Massachusetts, who cordially embrace and firmly support the doctrines of the reformation; in other words, those who are thoroughly *orthodox*, according to the usual meaning of that term. How many of them would have any difficulty

in expressing their assent to the doctrines of Christianity, as they are generally contained in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism? Who of them would ever find occasion to make it a serious question, "*how far their opinion may be from the literal import of the language, and yet they be able to subscribe that language with a good conscience?*" Does not the language of the Catechism in its "literal import" unfold that great system of gospel truth, in which all of the above description agree? And what difficulty can they have about the latitude allowable? For however they may differ in their modes of conception and explanation on certain points; they can have no difficulty in receiving "the principles of Christianity, as they are generally expressed in the Catechism." They may have other objections to joining the General Association; but they certainly can have none on account of the faith required? *The plan was never meant to be so liberal, as to include those, to whom the rule of admission is an offence.*

But our correspondent does not stop at possible or supposeable cases. He pleads what he considers a certain fact, as an objection to the proposed plan. "Nothing, (he says) can be more certain, than that many gentlemen, who most warmly advocate the measure, must subscribe to the Catechism, if they subscribe at all, in a sense very different from what the language imports." He has made the most of this objection. And yet what is the amount? Let us attend to his three cases, two of which relate to the same subject, and may properly be reduced to one.

The first case is stated in these words: "The Catechism asserts, that *the covenant being made with Adam, &c. all mankind sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.* Now it is the belief of many persons engaged to promote the contemplated coalition, not that the posterity of Adam either *sinned in him or fell with him*, but are answerable for their actual transgressions and those only."

It is but just to remind our readers, that the gentlemen here designed, as well as Calvinists in general, believe that God, in his sovereign wisdom, constituted a moral connexion between Adam and his posterity, so that his disobedience was the sure occasion of their sin and ruin, while his persevering obedience would have been followed by their holiness and felicity. They fully admit the propriety of the expression, that "all mankind sinned in him and fell with him," in its plain, scriptural sense, which, in their opinion, is obviously a figurative sense. It is similar to the apostle's expression, "as in Adam all die;" which, according to their ideas, cannot be taken literally; for men cannot *die* before they *live;* but must be understood, as teaching in strong, figurative language, *that their death takes place as a certain consequence of their relation to Adam, their representative and head;* or, to express it differently, that *they die in Adam, as, in him, a foundation was laid for their death, or as his disobedience involved their death, as a sure effect.* The clergymen, above referred to, think the passage just cited from the Catechism must be understood in

the same obvious and consistent sense. Our correspondent must, upon due reflection, perceive, that whatever difficulty there may be in his mind on this subject, there can be none in *theirs*. And we cannot omit this opportunity of declaring our warmest approbation of his own rule, "not to magnify points of disagreement." It is our decided opinion, that if all the Congregational ministers in this State, who hold the doctrines of grace, would fully explain to each other their own sentiments on this point, they would find no disagreement sufficient to prevent their subscribing the same creed, or their acting together, as brethren, in the most harmonious manner.

The next case, which our correspondent introduces, relates to the following declaration of the Catechism; viz. "the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, *consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin*, the want of original righteousness, &c." On this J. observes; "the corruption of man's nature is indeed acknowledged by the gentlemen, of whom we are speaking; but they do not believe, that the sinfulness of man's fallen estate consists in the guilt of Adam's sin. Of course, when they subscribe to this article, it must be with very great latitude."

On this passage of the Catechism, taking the words in their plain and literal import, we shall not contradict our correspondent. If instead of saying, "the sinfulness of man's fallen estate *consists in* the guilt of Adam's first sin," it had been said, that it *flows from it*, as a consequence, or was *occasioned by it*, many would have thought it more correct. Ministers of the gospel in this State would generally find a difficulty in subscribing a Catechism containing this one particular phrase, without some such provision, as the rules of the General Association have made. But with that provision, the most upright conscience can find no difficulty.

The third case of supposed embarrassment remains.

"It is the opinion of many, who advocate the measure proposed, that the divine efficiency is as necessary to produce evil, as good; that Adam no more sinned by his own strength, than the sinner repents and turns to God by his own strength; that it was as much a divine power, which produced an evil heart in Adam, as it is a divine power, which produces a good heart in the regenerate. Why should these persons be required to subscribe such a sentence as this? *Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.* Surely, they would not think it correct to say, that the sinner, being left to the freedom of his own will, turns from the state in which he was created, by repentance towards God," &c.

How happy would it be for the cause of religion, if Christians exercised more justice and candour, than they commonly do, in representing each other's sentiments on controverted subjects. The gentlemen designed, in the paragraph above quoted, will doubtless say, that this is an incorrect statement of their theory, calculated to make a wrong impression, and to excite

groundless prejudice. It would be easy for them to inform the objector, that they are as much concerned as he is, to secure the divine character and human agency; that they admit no divine efficiency, which does not consist with man's exercising the most perfect freedom, or acting according to his own will; and, therefore, that they are not embarrassed with the difficulties, which he supposes must embarrass them, not considering those difficulties as belonging either to their system, or to the passage of the Catechism above quoted.

It would be both needless and impertinent for the Editors to discuss the controverted, metaphysical question respecting the divine efficiency. Our only object is to show, that the question has no relation to the plan of the General Association. It was always designed, that the plan should be such, as to embrace those, who speculate differently on that question. We regret that our correspondent ever thought of deriving an objection from this topic.

But he proceeds, "If one person subscribe with such latitude, why may not another? What union then will subscription produce?" We never supposed that *merely subscribing a creed* had any efficacy to produce union of sentiment. Subscribing is not, properly speaking, designed to *produce* union, where it does not exist, but to *express* it, where it does exist. Still we consider it a measure, which, in connexion with other things, may lead on to a greater and greater degree of union. When pious ministers, who agree in the doctrines of the reformation, or in the fundamental principles of the gospel, freely declare that agreement to each other, and their mutual desire thus far to walk together; when, in addition to this, they frequently meet in order to discuss, in a friendly, candid manner, those points on which their views are somewhat various, to consult for the general interest of religion, and to unite in fervent prayer; we have the greatest reason to indulge the hope, that a union more complete in itself, more happy to them, and more beneficial to religion, will ensue.

"It is well known, (says J.) that subscription to the Bible does not produce union of sentiment." But, if men were fair and honest, such subscription would *presuppose*, or *express* union. Yet, as things are, it neither presupposes, nor *expresses* union; because men are so inconsistent, as to profess their belief of the Bible, while they do not believe its contents. When "Trinitarians, Calvinists, Arminians, and Unitarians subscribe the Bible," there must be great error or dishonesty somewhere, or else the Bible is, of all books, the most unintelligible and contradictory. J. says, "they understand the Bible differently." This, though a well known fact, is not the root of the evil. But, contrary to his intention, this fact clearly shows the importance and necessity of *explaining the Bible* in confessions of faith, or in some other way, as the only satisfactory method of making known our own religious sentiments, and ascertaining those of others, and thus of being able to act with propriety in various cases, where the cause of truth is deeply concerned.

"Is it not clearly absurd, (says J.) to speak of an union to be produced by subscription to a confession, if it be understood, in the outset, that we may subscribe in what sense we please." *If this be understood*, the absurdity is granted. There is no end to *suppositions*. When it is *evident*, that they do not accord with the truth, they may properly be passed without notice.

What J. says about "the substance of the Catechism" does not pertain to the subject, as the expression is not used in the rule of General Association referred to. If "the substance of the Catechism" mean any thing different from "the doctrines of Christianity, as they are generally expressed in the Catechism," we have nothing to do with the phrase. If it mean the same, it has already been attended to. Nor do we think it necessary to make many remarks on J's supposition, "that some might subscribe, though Unitarians." If men will entirely renounce that system of religion, which is commonly called *orthodox*, and yet subscribe a Catechism containing that system; where is conscience? Where is honesty? But he says, "others would think they ought not to subscribe, if, in their apprehension, it contained the least error." And so ought all to think, if the intended subscription implied, that the subscribers profess to receive the Catechism, as an *infallible and perfect standard*, and to embrace *every particular idea* which it contains. But this is not implied.

J's observations on the theological character of many, who subscribe the xxxix articles, are undoubtedly just. But the fact stated proves the fault, not of the xxxix articles, nor of the practice of subscribing, but of *human nature*. It shows how strangely men may be influenced, even in religious concerns, by worldly considerations, and how many, who are invested with the sacred office, are defective in moral character. But it ought to be recollected that, in this respect, the difference between England and America is very great. Here, no religion is established by law, and no civil advantage is connected with subscribing. Here, such perfect liberty of conscience is enjoyed, and so inconsiderable is the influence of prescription, or of any system or opinion, that men can have very little inducement to subscribe, except real conviction, and serious regard to the interest of religion.

The state of things in Scotland might open the door for similar observations. But it is unnecessary to repeat.

"Surely," says J. "those, who feel most interest in this coalition, do not design, like king James I. to prevent the discussion of those points in theology, which are most often disputed." What reason could our correspondent have for this passage, containing such an uncandid implication, when it has been expressly and often stated, as one object of the coalition, *freely to discuss points of difference?*

His hypothesis respecting two ministers, one of whom holds the sentiments of Dr. Hopkins, and the other, the sentiments of Dr. Doddridge, and respecting the difficulties, which would attend their ministerial inter-

course, seems quite needless, and affords a very feeble argument against the proposed plan. We admit that there is some real difference of opinion between the two ministers supposed. But that difference will be managed with a much greater degree of Christian candour and mutual forbearance from the circumstance of their belonging to the same Association, their having agreed in the same common confession of faith, and their often meeting together for the advancement of religion. On this point we add one request. Let our correspondent, or any other man, with a mind unprejudiced by names, and seriously intent upon the great things of religion, peruse the volume of Dr. Hopkins' sermons lately published, and an equal number of Dr. Doddridge's sermons on evangelical subjects, and then judge, whether the difference between them were so great, as to prevent the most happy and useful ministerial intercourse. The feelings and the practice of many ministers, whose difference of opinion is the same with the difference between those two authors, abundantly prove the mistake of our correspondent's argument. We wish him to inquire, whether in this matter, he has not overlooked his own excellent rule, "not to magnify points of disagreement."

We pass by several things, which are open to just animadversion, and come to the last objection offered against the plan of the General Association; viz. "its being conducive to a wrong estimate of clerical character." But in what way? The answer is this; that while evangelical ministers in general subscribe to the Catechism, which will thus become the standard of orthodoxy, some others, as orthodox as they, will not judge it proper to subscribe. Of course, they will be reputed persons of corrupt sentiments, and their character and usefulness will be injured. To this objection there may be a double reply.

First. There is no probability, that the fact, here supposed, will occur so frequently, as to become any considerable inconvenience. In order that the Catechism may be raised to the dignity, and have the influence of a public standard of orthodoxy, in the way above mentioned, it must be approved and subscribed by the generality of those, who are deemed orthodox. Now, if the great body of learned, orthodox, and pious ministers, whose judgment, in this case, cannot be swayed by motives of worldly interest or honour, are seriously convinced of the safety, the propriety, and the advantage of subscribing "the doctrines of Christianity, as they are generally expressed in the Catechism," it must be candidly supposed, that there are good reasons for such a subscription, and that others, who embrace the same doctrines, are equally candid, and devoted, with equal zeal, to the great interest of Christianity, will be equally satisfied as to their duty. If there be a few exceptions, they will, in all probability, be of those, who indulge needless scruples, groundless fears and alienations, or some singularities of thinking

for which no remedy can be provided. In every class of men, there are some eccentric characters, who dislike all precise rules, however necessary to the common welfare. But shall a fear of leaving out, or a wish to accommodate a small number of such characters, supersede a plan, which promises extensive utility to the public?

In the second method of reply, while we admit that, now and then, an orthodox and pious minister may not think it best to subscribe, we question the correctness of J's supposition, as to its effects upon *his reputation and usefulness*. If there were no other way of ascertaining his theological character, the objection would be more just. But this is not the case. Not only his own congregation, but the congregations in the vicinity, and his brethren extensively, are under advantages to judge of his sentiments and character, without any reference to his subscribing, or not subscribing. If, from his preaching, conversation, and life, they are led to doubt the soundness of his faith, they would certainly think none the better of him for his subscribing the Catechism. On the other hand, if, by the means abovementioned, they were satisfied, that he was sound in the faith, his not subscribing would make no alteration in their opinion. At first, possibly, they would be surprised, and would hardly be able to account for it. But they would soon learn the reasons of his conduct, and his character would stand in its just and proper light. We have as high a regard, as our correspondent manifests, for clerical character and usefulness; and should be as reluctant, as he, to authorize a plan injurious to either. But we are willing that those, who best know what concerns the reputation and usefulness of ministers, should judge, whether the proposed plan of the General Association has an inauspicious, threatening aspect upon the clergy. If, in some rare instances, it may be *abused* to the disadvantage of an individual; this is nothing more, than we are to expect from every measure, which is calculated for the public advantage.

We shall now attend to the plan, which our correspondent proposes as a substitute for the General Association. Here let it be understood, that we object to none of the measures, which he proposes, in themselves considered. We only aim to expose them, *considered as a substitute*. One more remark will be made in this place, that readers may apply it to every particular, as they proceed. We introduce the remark, without any qualifications; *that*, contrary to what we should have expected, *all the objections, which can be urged against the General Association, may be urged with equal, and, in some respects, with superior force, against the proposed substitute*. The particulars of that substitute will now be considered.

"1. Let those ministers, who believe that men are in a state, from which they need to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, endeavour to cultivate a friendly intercourse."

Thus J. begins his plan by laying down *a creed*, which is to operate as a standard of clerical character, and to regulate min-

isterial intercourse. When he speaks of "those who believe" the truth specified, he undoubtedly means, those who *profess* to believe it. To determine, with certainty, who really believe it, is not the work of man. Those ministers, therefore, who profess to believe this article of faith, "that men are in a state, from which they need to be renewed by the Holy Spirit," are the ministers who are to cultivate a friendly intercourse. But, to fall into J's strain of objection; how "extremely vague" is the language here used! What could we know of a minister's sentiments, from his subscribing such a proposition? Men, whose religious opinions are as distant from each other, as the poles, may profess such a belief. We might as well have no creed, as this. For men may put their own construction upon the terms used; or they may profess "with mental reservation;" or they may profess to believe "what they wish the article were." But this one proposition, be it more or less vague, is the proposed creed. Now if the plan of General Association be objectionable on account of its comprising a creed, the proposed substitute is objectionable on the same account. But one question remains; viz. whether the creed, which our Correspondent brings forward, be preferable to the Catechism, composed by the Westminster Assembly of Divines? The Christian community must judge.

But J. seems to carry his idea of articles of faith still further. Agreeing at first in the article above mentioned, ministers are to go on to a more perfect system; according to his second article; "Let them collect the most important points, on which they do agree, and unite for the defence of them." Such points of divinity, collected, written down, and subscribed, or in some other way agreed to, are to constitute their *standing creed*. For the defence of this they are to "unite," or to join themselves together in one body. Here is the essence of a general association. And if the creed, thus formed, should happen to contain "the doctrines of Christianity as they are generally expressed in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," how would the plan differ from the plan of the General Association, already established? And what would be the advantage of changing the one already established for another, when no essential difference is contemplated? But if the creed to be formed upon the new plan should happen to contain a system of divinity different from the general system contained in the Catechism; then the new plan of Association would, indeed, be very different from the one lately established, and its adherents would be a different set of men.

On the third article of the new scheme we make only this remark, that it is no improvement on the plan of the General Association, which has the same object in view.

"4. Though they should not pretend union of sentiment, where it does not exist, let them not magnify the points of disagreement."

If the sarcastic implication in the former part of this article

had any foundation, we would be the last to complain of it. As to the rest, we consider it a very important rule, a rule which has had no small influence in the plan of the General Association, "not to magnify points of disagreement;" and we shall be glad to find our Correspondent co-operating with others in carrying it into effect.

"5. Let them agree not to act in the ordination of a candidate, unless liberty be given to examine his qualifications."

Here again the plan of our Correspondent falls in with the plan of the General Association. But we wish, as well as he, "to understand the measures contemplated, and the probable result." If it be a rule to examine the candidate, it must be upon the principle of *some standard*, with which his qualifications ought to correspond. And one of these two ways must be adopted. Either the members of the ordaining council must have different standards, that is, each one must have a standard according to his own opinion; which, in case of different opinions among the members of the council, would create endless difficulties, and would convert their meeting into a scene of unhappy contention;—or there must be a common standard, in which all concerned in ordaining the candidate agree. Doubtless our Correspondent would prefer something like this. His idea of a common standard would extend as far, at least, as his first article; that is, he would have it considered by all an essential qualification of every candidate, *to believe*, "that men are in a state, from which they need to be renewed by the Holy Spirit." Perhaps he would go still further. When the ministers, who should coalesce according to his scheme, had finished their collection of "the most important points on which they agree," they might, perhaps, think it important, that some or all of them should be received by candidates. Their standard might finally contain a creed like the general system of doctrines contained in the Catechism. If so, it would agree with the plan of the General Association. If not, it would be entitled to a treatment, which we could better determine, when the proposed collection of important articles should be made.

J's last article is to be highly approved. It accords exactly with the design of the General Association.

Finally, the attentive reader will perceive, that the plan of the General Association contains every thing valuable in the plan proposed by our Correspondent, besides being guarded against those things which embarrass his plan, and render it impracticable.

We close with a suggestion. It is not to be supposed, that the pages of the Panoplist can be consistently filled with a continuation of this subject. Our Correspondent "only wished to propose such objections as occurred to his mind." He has had the opportunity. To his objections we have endeavoured to make a particular, a serious, and a fair reply; which we hope will be satisfactory. The whole is now before the Christian public, and is respectfully referred to their decision, by the

EDITORS.

ON THE NAME CHRISTIAN.

NAMES, considered in themselves, are of no importance; but they become influential, in consequence of their signification. Individuals and societies may have names given them, either by their friends, or enemies; and the application of these names may be very improper, from partiality on the one side, or hostility on the other. Thus we find Jesus Christ was called a Samaritan, and accused of having a devil; and we read also of some who called themselves Jews, and were not, but were of the synagogue of Satan; and of others, who said they were apostles, but were found liars.

The name *Christian* is almost universally given to the people living in this country; and from its indiscriminate application, the country has received the appellation, "a Christian land." Respectability and interest are associated with the title; and however unsuitable to the character of a Christian any man's life may be, his language is, *let me be called by this name to take away my reproach from among men.* To unchristianize a man in name, however infidel in practice, is to touch the apple of his eye; and to bring upon one's self the odium of *bigotry* and *uncharitableness.* It would be matter of great joy to every true disciple of Jesus Christ if all, who received the name *Christian*, sustained the Christian character; for "charity thinketh no evil." But to believe any man to be a Christian, while he has *only* the name, is not charity, but cruelty; for "charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." A banditti, in their depredations may compliment each other with the phrase, "honest fellows;" and a company of drunkards may call each other "sober men;" but who would not condemn such gross perversion of language; and who ought not to pity such persons sporting themselves with their own deceivings? The writer trusts that his charity is as broad as the Bible; for it is a maxim with him, *charity more circumscribed than the Bible, is censoriousness; and more extended, is libertinism.* His design is not to accuse and condemn; but, by stating what appears to him truth, to convince and correct, "commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The end he proposes is gained, if any of his fellow men, trusting in a name to live while they are dead, are undeceived, and turned to the Lord; or if Christians are led to walk more worthy of the name by which they are called. With a view to this, let us inquire into the meaning and origin of the name Christian; the character of the persons, to whom it was originally applied; and the improper application of it to many at the present day.

1. The meaning and origin of the name *Christian.* This name simply signifies *a follower of Christ.* In its proper application to any person, it supposes that person to be a believer of the doctrines Christ delivered, ready to obey the precepts he enjoined, to observe the ordinances he instituted, and willing, at the risk of life, and all its comforts,

to follow him. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts xi. 26. There are two places of that name mentioned in scripture, the one in Pisidia, and the other in Syria. See Acts xiii. 14, and xi. 19—26, and xiii. 1—3. Antioch in Syria is the place where this name originated. A question naturally arises, *by whom* was this name first given to the disciples? Was it of divine, or of human origin? In its application at first it must have been given them by divine appointment, or the disciples took it to themselves, or it must have been applied to them by others. It has been thought by some, that the great love the disciples had to Christ led them to call themselves by his name. To this it may be replied; if this name had originated from the disciples, instead of its being said, "the disciples *were called* Christians, it ought to have been said, "the disciples *called themselves* Christians first at Antioch." Others have thought that this name was at first given to the disciples by divine appointment.* Had this been the case, I think it is probable we should have found it more frequently used in the subsequent history of the Acts of the Apostles, and in their Epistles; which were all written, a considerable time after the disciples were called Christians at Antioch. It is found in two other places only in scripture; and in both used, rather as a term of reproach, and a name by which the disciples were known as objects of persecution in the world, than an honourable name in use among themselves. When the apostles wrote their epistles to the churches, or when Christians addressed one another, they used the terms saints, brethren, &c. but never addressed each other by the name Christian. This name is used in Acts xxvi. 28 by king Agrippa to Paul. After having heard the apostle defend himself against the false charges brought against him by the Jews, he says, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." This intimates, that disgrace was associated with that name in the minds of men, and that to become a Christian was in other words to become an object of persecution. This is more explicitly stated in the other passage where this name occurs; 1 Pet. iv. 16, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

It has, therefore, been thought by others, that this name was not of divine appointment, but that it was given at first to the disciples of Christ, as a term of reproach. This opinion is confirmed, from what historians say of the people of Antioch, where this name originated, that they were famed for scurrilous jesting. This name in those days, might arise in a similar way with names in these days. Thus, in philosophy, those who have embraced Newton's system,

* Those, who consider the name Christian as of divine appointment, suppose χρηματισαι in Acts xi. 26, means "to be named by divine appointment, or direction." In proof of this, Mat. ii. 12, 22. Luke ii. 26. Acts x. 22. Heb. viii. 5, and xi. 7, and xii. 25, have been quoted. Parkhurst, in his Greek Lexicon, says he cannot, however, find that the verb ever has this signification.

are called Newtonians; and those who have received Plato's opinions, are called Platonists. In religion, those, who have received Calvin's system, are called Calvinists; and those who have embraced the doctrines of Arminius are called Arminians; and those who believe as Luther believed are called Lutherans. These names are applied to persons, who become followers of those who framed these respective systems. In like manner the disciples at Antioch might receive the name Christian, from their having embraced Christ's system, and becoming his followers. Whatever way this name originated, the disciples of Jesus Christ have no cause to be ashamed of it; but it has been, and still is for a lamentation, that many called Christians are a disgrace to the name. In those days, it was expressive of *character*; in these days, it is merely *nominal*. In those days, it was applied to a few; in these days, to all indiscriminately. When first given, it was probably applied as a term of reproach; but now, it has become a title of honour. *Then*, it exposed to persecution; *now*, it secures esteem and respect. Temporal loss was *then* connected with its application; *now*, worldly gain. The name, as now used, seems to have changed its original meaning; and the greater part of those, to whom it is applied, to be destitute of the original character. Many names have been invented, and applied to the disciples of Christ, besides that of Christian. In these days, the world is filled with denominations, and their tendency has been to lead the followers of Christ to become followers of men. These things ought not so to be. If disciples of Christ, we ought to follow Christ only, and not to be servants of men. Names may change their original meaning; original names may now be applied to improper persons; yea, new names may be invented, and applied to the disciples of Christ; but let us ever remember, that the character of a true disciple is unchangeable. Now, as well as formerly, "if any man will be Christ's disciple, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow him."

CYPRIAN.

To be continued.

Selections.

The following Extract is from the Christian Mirror, a recent publication. It will serve to exemplify the faults to which a person of ardent feelings is liable, even when earnestly engaged in pursuing a religious course. [Evan. Int.

"MISS L. was a young lady of an amiable temper, great sincerity, and uncommon flow of spirits; to these natural qualifications was added every accomplishment which might be expected from an affluent situation in life; her company was sought

by all the young and gay of her acquaintance, and every visit seemed dull, if Miss L. was not of the party.

"Her friends, however, discovered that she suddenly became gloomy and melancholy; her company was no longer pleasant, and she, whom every one had admired and flattered, was sneered at as a Methodist,* and avoided as a religious enthusiast; the only kind of *enthusiasm* which worldly people uniformly condemn. A man may be an *enthusiast* in poetry, painting, music, or philosophy; that is, he may be unreasonably attached to them, and the world will admire him for that very attachment; but let him shew as great a zeal for the cause of God, and the welfare of his soul, (a cause to which our attachment can never be unreasonably strong, nor our attention too eager) and every tongue will condemn him.

"The following circumstance occasioned the change in Miss L. which rendered her so very disagreeable to her former admirers. On a Lord's day evening one of her friends proposed going to hear a popular minister, who was to preach in the town where she lived. As, from unexpected disappointments, they could not make up their party at cards, it was thought the dull hour might as well be passed away in the house of God, and accordingly these two ladies agreed to go. The discourse was occasioned by the death of a young person who had been suddenly called into eternity: the sermon was adapted to the event, and, for once in her life, Miss L. became serious. She listened, mused, wondered at the truths she heard, and in vain endeavoured to conceal her flowing tears. When the service was over she went home with her companion, but not a word was spoken. Each of them carefully concealed from their friends the place where they had been; the one, because she was ashamed of what she felt, and the other, because she was angry with herself, for having been the occasion of all this anxiety and distress to her amiable friend. It was, however, soon visible enough to all, that Miss L. was deeply affected with something; but nobody could account for it; one suspected she was ill, another that she had been offended: they were willing to suppose any thing, rather than that their gay companion could be so weak as to be affected by any thing said in a *pulpit*. They thought of a thousand other causes, while she at an early hour retired to her chamber; but it was to weep, not to rest. The faithful warnings of the preacher still rung in her ears, and she could not sleep. Her distress continued for several days, and was increased by the attempts of her friends to remove it. Their amusements, their pleasures, their vain conversation, was loathsome to her: instead of healing they aggravated the wound in her conscience; and in the whole circle of her acquaintance there was not one who could direct her to a remedy. At length it was settled, by all, that she had lost her senses; and the poor distracted girl became the subject of conversation

* The name of Methodist is applied to many classes of dissenters in England.

and pity in every company. It was found out that she had been *meddling* with religion, and there was not a doubt but it had made her mad. Every expression of sympathy for her was mingled with caution against having too much to do with religion; and her connexions rejoiced in the persuasion, that they had just enough to carry them to heaven, without the possibility of its causing any derangement on earth. Indeed, her distress was so great, that, had she not met with relief, it might have ended in *real* lunacy: but he, who knoweth our infirmities, and remembereth we are but dust, administered to her strong consolation. Under hearing the same minister, who had filled her mind with terror, she experienced a degree of comfort. While he was representing Christ as the able and willing Saviour of the chief of sinners, her fears were dissipated, the garment of praise was given her for the spirit of heaviness, and the oil of joy for mourning. She now became as cheerful as ever, but her happiness flowed from a different source: praise was continually in her lips. She became anxious to bring her acquaintance to the same Saviour whom she had found, and fondly imagined if they would but give her a hearing, they must be convinced.

"As her carnal acquaintance soon forsook her she acquired a new set of acquaintance, who, though inferior to her former ones in quality, in fortune, and in rank, were greatly superior to them in virtue, piety, and solid worth. Their society contributed much to her comfort, and growth in grace. She had a heart peculiarly formed for the enjoyments of Christian communion, and she frequently stood in need of the counsel, and sometimes of the gentle rebukes of her judicious friends. Her inexperience in religion, and the warmth of her temper, frequently led her into errors. She was always judging of her state in the sight of God, by her own frame and feelings: thus, if she was in a lively frame, she would think well of her state, but when her natural spirits sunk, she would then imagine there was no grace in her heart. The last sermon she heard was the worst, or the best she had ever heard in her life: and if the preacher did but move the passions, however injudicious, or erroneous, if not grossly so, he was sure to have her applause. If any person appeared at all under serious impressions, Miss L. would at once pronounce them converted, and was, sometimes, angry with the more grave and thoughtful, who wished to judge of the tree not by its blossoms, but by its fruits. Her friends lamented her want of self-government; she was somehow betrayed into levities unbecoming her profession. Being in the habit of feeling and speaking warmly, she often made strong declarations of attachment, when, perhaps, she hardly meant half what she said; and sometimes she would make promises, without considering whether she could fulfil them; not to say that she now and then forgot to fulfil them when she was able to do it.

"Hasty in her decisions, she would often say and do many im-

prudent things, and frequently did not use the best means for attaining desirable objects: though it must be allowed, by her activity in embracing seasons of doing good, she often accomplished her end, when the more prudent and cautious Christian has lost the season, in reflecting upon the most proper means of improving it. The poor often felt her benevolence, and the afflicted were often refreshed by her kind and friendly visits: her soul was disposed to sympathy; she wept with them that wept, and rejoiced with them that rejoiced. Lukewarm professors would be disposed to mark every little failing in a character whose zeal reproached their own indifference: and it is to be lamented that she so often furnished them with an opportunity. Her more intimate friends admired the excellencies, without overlooking the defects of her character, and would sometimes warn her of her danger: neither was she backward in taking reproof: but whether the warnings were not given with sufficient faithfulness, or repeated with sufficient frequency, we cannot determine: however it was, Miss L. seemed but little benefitted by them; her natural disposition got the better of every effort, and she continued the same imprudent, affectionate, changeable, amiable creature.

"At length her haste and imprudence became its own cure; and the kind providence of God accomplished that by afflictions, which the concern of her friends had in vain attempted. A few months after Miss L.'s conversion, her relatives became so far reconciled as to behave towards her with civility, and she visited them occasionally. At first her visits were short, and she was always upon her guard; being generally accompanied by some Christian friend. But one day, unhappily, she made one among a large party, composed of carnal and worldly persons. Miss L. was determined to show them she was not ashamed of her religion; indeed, pride, under the disguise of zeal, was her principal motive for making this visit: accordingly she took the first opportunity of introducing her favourite subject; none of the company seemed disposed to listen to her, except a military gentleman, who was too polite not to attend to a lady. Miss L. delighted that at length she had obtained a hearing, went on most fluently, began to fancy she was doing good, and at last could not help exclaiming, 'Dear captain D. how I long for your conversion!' The captain replied, with his accustomed politeness, 'I should be happy, Miss L. to be *converted* by you, would you favour me with another interview.' This was agreed to without a moment's thought. From that time they became intimate. The captain left off swearing, and other outward immoralities, attended Miss L. with the utmost assiduity to the house of God, admired all that she admired, and so completely won her affections, that he very soon possessed himself of her fortune, and her person, by a precipitate marriage. It was in vain that her friends argued with her on the propriety of waiting to see if there was really a change in the heart of the person to whom she was about to attach herself for life. She was too proud of her convert to

doubt a moment of the reality of the change. All remonstrances were useless; she declared that the finger of Providence was so evident in the whole affair, that nothing should restrain her. As soon as captain D. had gained the object, he was not very ceremonious in throwing off the mask which Miss L. had given him the trouble of wearing but for a short time: at first he laughed at all religion as fit only for women and fools, and at length, he openly and violently persecuted his amiable wife.

"It is unnecessary to enter into a particular account of the trials which Mrs. D. was now called to undergo. With difficulty, and very rarely, could she attend the public means of grace; and in a great measure she was cut off from all her religious connexions. These were heavy trials. She had no companion but her Bible, no friend but her God and Saviour, no means of grace but those of a private nature: nevertheless, she has often said that before her afflictions, she *talked* about religious enjoyments; now she *knew* what they were. Her devotions were indeed often interrupted by blasphemy and abuse, her Bible sometimes taken from her; but nothing could separate her from the love of God, and the enjoyment of his presence. She now lived and walked by faith, in a more eminent degree than she had ever done before. She had abundant occasion for all her natural spirits, and if she had not been remarkably favoured in this respect, must have sunk under her heavy burden. What the kind endeavours of her friends could never effect was now produced by the severity of affliction; and a degree of excellence appeared in the character of this lady which had never before been manifested. Her cheerfulness appeared truly amiable, and unmixed with the frailties to which she had been subject. As she was now forced to read more, and converse less about religion, her judgment became more solid. Her zeal was in nothing diminished; but it was tempered with prudence. By her meekness and patience she has often disarmed the rage of a brutal husband; yet she displayed fortitude in what she knew was right and consistent with the divine will: but she had already, to her cost, experienced too much the sad effects of the weakness of her own judgment to shew any thing of vain-glory, or positiveness in defending her opinions.

"This flower, which now displayed new charms, and appeared peculiarly beautiful, was not long to adorn the garden of God on earth. Severe trials, in a few years, exhausted the spirits of the once animated Miss L.; and though her mind was vigorous, and her soul in prosperity, yet her body sunk under the pressure of accumulated trials, and after a short and rough continuance here, she was removed into that state "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

THE FATHERS.

In the sacred writings, the name of *Fathers* is given to the ancient elders and prophets of the Jewish church. In the christian world it is employed in allu-

sion to the more early apologists and martyrs for the cause of the Redeemer. As reference is often heard, in discourses from the pulpit, to their writings and characters, the subsequent statement taken from the "Ecclesiastes" of bishop Wilkins, it is presumed, will be acceptable, especially to our youthful readers.

"The ancient Fathers are usually reckoned up according to the centuries in which they lived.

The first century.

Clemens Romanus,
Ignatius,
Dionysius Areopagita,
Polycarp.

The second century.

Justin Martyr,
Athenagoras,
Irenæus.

The third century.

Tertullian,
Theophilus Antiochinus,
Clemens Alexandrinus,
Origen,
Gregorius Thaumatergus,
Cyprian,
Arnobius,
Lactantius.

The fourth century.

Eusebius Cesariensis,
Athanasius,
Hilarius,
Cyril,
Basil,
Gregory Nazianzen,
Epiphanius,
Ambrose,
Gregorius Nyssenus,
Theodoret,
Hieronymus,
Chrysostom.

The fifth century.

Augustine,
Cyril of Alexandria,
Chrysologus,
Salvian,
Prosper,
Fulgentius.

The sixth and seventh centuries.

Gregory the Great.

The eighth century.

Beda,
Damascenus.

The ninth century.

Nicephorus.

The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.

Theophylact,
Anselm,
Bernard,
Peter Lombard.

There are a few others who are called lesser fathers, but the above are the principal."

The characters of some of the most eminent are thus drawn by Erasmus:

Basil is luminous, pious, sound, sweetly grave, and gravely sweet, employing no exuberance of words.

Athanasius in teaching is wonderful.

The writings of Chrysostom are popular, and accommodated to the ears and affections of the uneducated multitude.

In Gregory Nazianzen there is much quickness of intellect, and a sufficient vehemence.

Tertullian is unpolished, yet keen in confuting heretics, and severe in exposing vices.

Cyprian is open, vehement, serious and pleasingly fluent.

The sentences of Ambrose are shrewd, affected, and often very obscure.

Hieronymus is apt at every kind of writing, and ardent in exciting the affections.

Augustine is happy and eloquent in unpremeditated composition, but he is rather pleasing than profound.

Prudentius breathes much of Christian eloquence.

Bernard is cheerful, and prompt in awakening the passions. [*Evan. Int.*

ANECDOTE.

On the top of a hill, near to Hoddom castle, there is a square tower, over the door of which are carved the figures of a dove and a serpent, and between them the word *Repentance;* whence the building is called the *Tower of Repentance.* It is said, that Sir R. Steele, while riding near this place, saw a shepherd boy reading his Bible, and asked him "what he learned from it?" "The way to heaven," answered the boy: "And can you shew it to me?" said Sir Richard in banter. "You must go by that tower," said the shepherd; and he pointed to the Tower of Repentance.

[*Scott's Minstrelsy.*

Review of New Publications.

Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend on the following Subjects. 1. *On a man's writing Memoirs of himself.* 2. *On Decision of Character.* 3. *On the Application of the Epithet Romantic.* 4. *On some of the Causes by which evangelical Religion has been rendered less acceptable to persons of cultivated Taste. By John Foster.* 2 *vols. in one.* 12mo. *First American from third London edition.* Hartford. (Con.) Lincoln & Gleason.

Concluded from p. 380.

The Essays, which we have already examined, are equally interesting to all classes of people. The subject of the fourth and last is peculiarly so to Christians and men of taste. It is an inquiry into the causes of "the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion." It claims the attention of Christians, and, especially, of Christian ministers. Mr. F. a man of evangelical sentiments and unquestionable taste, and no ordinary judge of the operations of the human mind, thinks he discovers in Christians themselves some of the causes of this aversion. The man of mere taste will find in this essay a happy delineation of the feelings of his own mind, and a striking view of some of those reasons, which have kept him an alien from the family of God.

The first cause suggested by Mr. F. is, "that this religion is the inhabitant of many weak and uncultivated minds. Contracted and obscure in its abode, it will of course appear, as the sun through a misty sky, with but little of its magnificence. In taking such a dwelling the religion seems to imitate what was prophesied of its Author, that when he should appear there should be "no beauty in him that he should be desired."

In his intercourse with men of this description the man of taste has probably found some zealous Christians, who were slightly acquainted with the evidences of their faith, and were ready to discourage every attempt to lay bare its foundations. He may have heard the discourse of others, whose religion involved no intellectual exercise, and strictly speaking, no *subject* of intellect. Separately from their feelings it has no definition, no topics, no distinct succession of views. He has found others, who made the whole of religion lie in two or three points of opinion, which they were always ready zealously to defend even before they were questioned.

The great majority of Christians are precluded by their condition in life from any acquisition of general knowledge. Many of these are, of course, subjects of extreme intellectual poverty. He may often have seen them live on for a number of years, content with the same confined views, the same meagre list of topics, and the same uncouth language; and have observed as complacent a sense of sufficiency in their little sphere, as if it comprised every thing which it is possible for any mind to see in the Christian religion. The attachment of some Christians to *modes* of worship may have excited his surprise, and their religious *habits*, his disgust.

"Every thing," says Mr. F. "which could, even distantly, remind him of grimace, would inevitably do this; as for instance, a solemn lifting up of the eyes; artificial impulses of the breath: grotesque and regulated gestures, and postures, in religious exercises: an affected faltering of the voice; and I might add abrupt religious exclamations in common discourse, though they were even benedictions to the Almighty, which he has often heard so ill-timed, as to have an irreverent and almost a ludicrous effect."

That the man of taste should allow these considerations to influence his *conduct*, in a case of such importance, is wholly reprehensible, and a solemn lecture is read to him by our author at the close of the second letter. Perhaps the littleness, with which their religion is invested by unlettered Christians, cannot fail to excite, at the time, pain and disgust. But he ought always to recollect, that it is wholly adventitious. If he does, it will need no great exercise of modesty to persuade him to be cautious, how he thinks that to be little, which Milton and Pascal felt to be great.

The unfortunate metaphors and similes with which he has heard evangelical sentiments explained and enforced by ignorant Christians, and not unfrequently by the ministers of religion, have disgusted him with the sentiments themselves. The recurrence of the one is always accompanied by a recollection of the other.

"Among these," says Mr. F. "I shall notice only that common one in which the benefits and pleasures of religion are represented under the image of *food*. I do not recollect that in the New Testament, at least, this metaphor is ever drawn to a great length. But from the facility of the process it is not strange, that it has been amplified both in books and discourses into the most extended description; and the dining-room has been exhausted of images, and the language ransacked for substantives and adjectives, to stimulate the spiritual palate. The metaphor is

combined with so many terms in our language, that it will sometimes unavoidably occur, and when employed in the simplest and shortest form, it may, by transiently suggesting the analogy, assist the thought without lessening the subject. But it is degrading to spiritual ideas to be extensively and systematically transmuted, I might even say *cooked*, into sensual ones. It will take some time for a man to recover any great degree of solemnity in thinking on the delights or the supports of religion, after he has seen them reduced into all the forms of eating and drinking. When the mind has been taught to descend to a low manner of considering divine truth, it will easily descend to the lowest. There is no such violent tendency to abstraction and sublimity in the minds of the generality of readers and hearers, as to render it necessary to take any great pains for the purpose of retaining their ideas in some small degree of alliance with matter."

Another cause of this aversion to evangelical religion is the peculiarity of *language* in the discourses and books of its teachers; a peculiarity offensive to that classical standard of phraseology, which our best writers have so distinctly settled, and which every man of taste always realizes, if he is not able to define it. This peculiarity is chiefly owing to the use of a barbarous diction, wholly foreign from the standard itself; so much so, that were an enlightened foreigner, after having become familiar with the writings of Dryden and Addison, to hear a discourse formed in this manner, he would instinctively exclaim, "In what remote corner, placed beyond the authority of criticism and the circulation of literature, where a most dignified language stagnates into barbarism, did this man study his religion and acquire his phrases? or by what inconceivable perversion of taste and of labour has he framed for the sentiments of his religion, a vehicle so uncongenial with the eloquence of his country, and so adapted to dissociate them from all connexion with that eloquence."

Mr. F. distinguishes this diction into three parts.

The first is a peculiar mode of using various common words, partly by expressing ideas in such single words, as do not properly belong to them; as *walk* and *conversation*, instead of *conduct*, *actions*, and *deportment*; *flesh*, instead, sometimes, of *body*, sometimes of *natural inclination*; and partly by using such combinations of words as make uncouth phrases; as *a sense of divine things*, instead of *an impression of religious subjects*. The second is the use of a class of words peculiar in themselves; but which, at the same time, are not different in their meaning from others in general use. The words godliness, tribulation, lusts, carnal; might certainly give place to piety, affliction or distress, passions, sensual. The word blessedness might often, but not always, give place to happiness. Edification we think should hardly be made to give way to instruction or improvement. In the scriptural sense of the word they would be sorry substitutes.

The third distinction of the theological dialect is the use of words, which are properly *technical*, such as sanctification, grace, covenant, salvation. Although the reasons urged by Mr. F. for the disuse of these and similar words have weight, still we are unwilling to give

them up; and for this obvious reason, *that the ideas we form should have names.* To communicate ideas by description should be the work only of children, and we conceive that it will be difficult to find a word synonymous to either of the words above recited, if scripturally understood. In this case, especially, where the words in question are the only proper names of the richest blessings in the gift of God, the arguments must be strong, indeed, which shall induce us to resign them.

The reasons urged for the disuse of all these theological barbarisms are too powerful to be overlooked. They are these; the more easy conduct of religious conversation in mixed companies; the more satisfactory vindication of evangelical religion from the charge of fanaticism; the exposure of mere hypocrisy, by stripping it of that religious cant which it puts on and wears, as the proper *livery* of a Christian, in the drapery of which the body and limbs of corruption can so effectually be hid; the necessity which many sincere Christians would immediately feel of more precision in their principles; and the prevention of that unhappy impression made on the minds of men of cultivated taste, by a recurrence of barbarisms, as unnecessary as they are grating.

On the last of these reasons we remark, that beside the apology mentioned in the ensuing letter, theological writers are often ready to urge two singular considerations in defence of the peculiarity of their dialect. The first is, that their writings are intended for the benefit of all; and, as the ignorant are the majority, they are obliged to leave the level of men of taste, and conform their language and their thoughts to humbler views and more vulgar capacities. This answer is founded on a mistake. When we urge theologians to write good classical English, we do not, as they seem to think, ask for any peculiar elevation of language; we are not petitioning for what has strangely been called the *sublime* style, a style which derives its sublimity from its being seen, like an object from the top of a precipice, at a great *depth below* us, and which is most happily ridiculed in the following letter. We ask for no Roman conformities, no latinized barbarisms, no stateliness on stilts. These intruders, so uncongenial to Saxon frankness and Saxon vigour, not all the authority of Johnson was ever able to naturalize.

In answer to this consideration, we observe, that *the kind of writing, which taste and criticism patronize, is the writing which is most intelligible to all classes of people.* All men understand the Spectator and the Tatler. Dryden's Prose, perhaps the most beautiful of which our language can boast, is, if possible, the plainest; and the Pilgrim's Progress, or even the clumsiest work that can be selected, is not more intelligible to a little child, than that model of taste and elegance, *the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.*

But we have another reply. The scriptures were, if any book ever was, written for all classes of people. Herdsmen and shepherds, fishermen and tent makers, were among the persons employed to compose

them; men who possessed no greater advantages than other herdsmen and other tent makers. If then this defence be just, we ought to look into *their* writings, at least, for examples of coarse and vulgar language, for low comparisons, for mixed and clumsy metaphors. For certainly it will not be said that he, who dictated them emphatically for the poor and the needy, did not know the best language for his purpose. Search the Bible throughout, however, and you find no example of any condescension in the style of its language to the intellect of ignorance. And yet it is called, by the highest authority, "a way in which way-faring men, though fools, need not err."

The second consideration, which these writers allege is, that the importance of their errand ought of itself to command attention, and that they were not sent, nor are bound, to gratify the fastidiousness and delicacy of men of taste. We readily acknowledge with Mr. F. the high importance of the subject which they handle; but neither these writers nor ourselves feel it more forcibly than an ancient divine of some celebrity who declared, "I was made all things unto all men, that I might by all means save some;" "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world stands;" nor than he who declared, "It is impossible but that offences will come, but wo unto him by whom they come!" He who preached the Sermon on the Mount; he who told the story of the Prodigal and of Lazarus;—but we need not particularize; he who dictated the scriptures of truth, seems to have known full well, the value of taste, and to have been willing to win those, who cultivate it by examples of beauty and tenderness, of rhetorical and moral sublimity, superior to all the world has ever witnessed. And he seems thus to have furnished a model for his friends to copy.

A third ground of defence for the peculiarity of their diction, taken by these writers, is, that it has grown out of the language of the Bible. Mr. F's reply to this allegation is full and satisfactory, but too long to be transcribed, and too complete to be abridged. He is of opinion that passages of the scriptures, cited as such, are attended with an authority and a venerableness wholly peculiar; but is not willing to allow the same importance to combinations of words made in an intentional resemblance of the characteristic language of that book.

"Scriptural phrases," he remarks, "can no longer make a solemn impression, when modified and vulgarized into the texture of a language, which taken all together is the reverse of every thing that can attract or command. Such idioms may indeed remind one of prophets and apostles, but it is a recollection, which prompts to say, who are these men that, instead of seriously introducing at intervals the direct words of those revered dictators of truth, seem to be mocking the sacred language by a barbarous imitative diction of their own? They may affect the forms of a divine solemnity, but there is no fire from heaven. They may shew something like a burning bush, but it is without an angel. Let the oracles of inspiration be cited con-

tinually, both as authority and illustration, in a manner that shall make the mind instantly refer each expression that is introduced, to the venerable book from which it is taken; but let *our* part of religious language be simply ours, and let those oracles retain their characteristic form of expression unimitated to the end of time."

We never more sincerely regretted the narrowness of our limits, than throughout the whole of this fourth letter. It contains a general survey of the evangelical writers of England. We have no where met with a more finished specimen of sound criticism, and bold, masterly eloquence.

The remainder of the Essay is devoted to the following subject: The effect which a fondness for the polite literature of Greece, Rome, and modern Europe, has had on the diffusion of evangelical religion. The same vigour of thought, the same brilliancy of imagination, the same proofs of piety, pervade the whole of it. From some of the opinions, however, we should dare to differ; but we cannot go into an examination of the various particulars.

With regard to the style in which these Essays are written, our readers will be able to judge from the passages we have transcribed. For ourselves we frankly confess, that we had little time or inclination to think of it during the perusal. Still in instances not very rare we were obliged to proceed with deliberation and caution, and not unfrequently to retrace our steps. We think obscurity is the prominent defect.

It is an opinion often expressed, that those things are the best said, which we, when we read or hear them, think *we* should have said in the same manner. Were Mr. F. to be judged by this law, the verdict must go against him. Few men, we conceive, can read his Essays, without feeling their own incompetency to say such things, or to say them so well. The truth is, the rule, if it ever be true, can never hold good when applied to subjects about which we are not accustomed to think. When a man's thoughts possess the originality, so strongly discernible in our author, they cannot fail to give the same cast to his expressions. And perhaps we cannot pay a truer or a more deserved compliment to the language, than when we remark, that it is just such language, as the thoughts spontaneously select. The conceptions are animated and forcible; the images are brilliant and glowing; the addresses are eloquent and often sublime; and they rarely if ever lose any part of their dignity or grace by the kind of dress in which they are presented.

On the whole, we congratulate our readers and the community on the appearance of a work highly evangelical, and strictly classical; and while we fear that we shall not quickly see its like again, we recommend it without hesitation to men of sense, men of taste, and men of piety.

Religious Intelligence.

UNITED STATES.

An Account of the origin and progress of the mission to the Cherokee Indians, in a series of Letters from the Rev. Gideon Blackburn to the Rev. Dr. Morse.

LETTER V.

Maryville, Jan. 15, 1808.

REV. SIR,

HAVING established a second school on my own credit, and being solely accountable for its support, I wrote to the Committee of Missions on the subject, and received their answer, declaring that the scantiness of their funds would not allow them to extend their benevolence to that school, or in any shape be accountable for it; or even for any more of the cost of the first school than 200 dollars, as first stipulated; however, afterwards the appropriation was extended to five hundred dollars.

About this time my circumstances were truly embarrassing: I had the care of a congregation amongst the white people where I still live, which though pretty numerous were generally poor people, and being settled in a *new* country for several years had been much harassed by depredations and wars by the Indians; and still later by a circumstance relative to our boundary line; the people had settled south to an experimental line supposed to be the proper one: but when run by commissioners appointed by government, was considerably altered. Those southwest of the line were removed off and placed amongst those on the other side, where they continued a whole season. This so affected the whole neighbourhood composing my charge, that neither then or since have they been able to pay any thing considerable for the support of the gospel. I had also a rising and helpless family for which provision must be made: and by fatigues, and being exposed to cold, hunger, and wet, together with all the wretchedness of savage accommodations in my visits to the nation, and the severity of toil and hard labour at home, I was attacked with a complaint, which, settling in one of my legs, not only deprived me of the use of the limb, but also, by the keenness of the pain, and the quantity of the discharge, wasted my body, depressed my spirits, and broke my constitution.

Under these distresses, my family, parochial, or Indian duties, were performed with the utmost difficulty, and in pain too excruciating to be described by mortals.

My schools were increasing, my funds exhausted, my credit sinking, and my health to all appearance gone forever. The prospect was indeed gloomy! Just at this period a providential incident occurred, which invigorated my ebbing hope, and again saved the whole design from miscarriage. I had been obliged a little while before to purchase some supplies for the schools, which I procured in the nation from an Indian countryman on a short credit. But a little before the period, supposing I was always ready, he forwarded my due bill for payment by an Indian, with whom I knew the establishment of my credit was indispensable. Money I had none, nor was there ten dollars to be gathered in the village where I live, as it was just at the time of the merchants making their annual remittances, and every cent which could be collected was sent off, and I was unable to ride in search of any in the neighbourhood. I detained the messenger for breakfasting, &c. much longer than usual, in order to lay the case before God in solemn prayer, as I knew the existence of the whole was in jeopardy, if my credit failed with the nation. After returning by the help of my crutches from the silent grove, I felt a confidence that something would be done, though I knew not how it could be effected. I took my pen, and was about to write to a friend for the loan of 40 dollars, the sum required. At that instant

a gentleman called at my gate. As I walked out my heart felt some unusual emotions; he presented me a letter, and immediately retired. I knew by the hand writing it was from a friend in Philadelphia. Hastily opening it, I found enclosed a bank note of 50 dollars, accompanied with the following note: "After reading your letter of —— date to some friends last evening, a gentleman called at my door early this morning and handed the enclosed, to be used at your pleasure, but wishes his name concealed."

Thus the Lord enabled me to redeem my note, dismiss the Indian with pleasure and in full confidence of my resources, and thus, by saving my credit, preserved the institution from ruin.

Through many such mysterious steps has divine Providence led in the management of this undertaking, especially until the spring of 1806, when in a tour to the south I collected upwards of 1500 dolls, and at the same time was relieved almost miraculously from my bodily afflictions. Mercies never to be forgotten, to the praise of sovereign grace. May they be indelibly imprinted on my recollection, bringing me nearer to the throne of grace, until mortality is swallowed up of life. I am, &c.

GIDEON BLACKBURN.

Literary Intelligence.

UNITED STATES.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.

To the Patrons of Literature and Religion.

THE President and Fellows of *Middlebury College*, in the State of Vermont, respectfully represent the situation of the Institution under their immediate trust and guardianship, and solicit the opulent and liberal to aid them in promoting the interests of Literature and Religion. The Legislature of Vermont, having considered that the State was almost wholly destitute of the means of education, granted, A. D. 1800, to a number of individuals, the Charter of a College at Middlebury; but were unable to extend to it the hand of public bounty.

A commodious building for the accommodation of students was immediately prepared. A well selected Library of near seven hundred volumes, and a small Philosophical Apparatus, have been procured for the use of the students. Competent Instructors are obtained and permanently established. Forty-six *alumni* of the College have been admitted to the Degree of Bachelor of Arts. The number of under graduates is about sixty. The progress of the Institution has more than equalled the expectations of the most sanguine of its friends. It has depended for its success upon the liberality of private gentlemen, but has not yet received any adequate endowment. The State of Vermont is new. The inhabitants, generally, are indigent, and none are wealthy. The population, (which is rapidly increasing) amounts, at present, to two hundred thousand. The State is furnished with but few Academies, or good Schools for the education of youth. The number of Christian Preachers, of every denomination, is very small; and by far the greater part of the inhabitants of the State have not the gospel dispensed to them. *Middlebury College* is the chief resort of those youths who seek an education superior to what can be obtained at the common schools. A large proportion, as well of those who have received the honors of the College, as of the present under graduates, are serious young men, who are endeavouring to qualify themselves to become teachers of religion. To this Institution the hopes of the friends of religion within the State are directed, for the supply of the destitute churches and people with well qualified preachers of the gospel. The friends of the Institution are animated with the success

which has hitherto attended their efforts. Their exertions will be continued—will be increased. But the situation of the State, and the increase of students, require that their plans should be extended, and their means enlarged. And should the wealthy and benevolent think proper to contribute their assistance in enlarging the sphere of instruction in this infant Seminary, and thus aid the cause of learning and piety, they shall receive the warmest gratitude of all the present patrons of the Institution.

By order of the Board.

SETH STORRS, *Secretary.*

March 31, 1807.

FOREIGN.

CAPE TOWN,

Feb. 27, 1802.

THE dispatch that arrived last week from the gentlemen of the commission sent by government into the interior of this country contains the most pleasing and satisfactory accounts of the good understanding that invariably prevailed between them and the natives of every part of the country through which they passed in the progress of their journey to the Briequas, improperly it seems, so called, the real name of this nation being Boetzuanas. The commissioners speak in the highest terms of applause of the conduct of the missionaries settled among the natives inhabiting the country near the Orange River; and also of the poor Hottentots, Bastards, and Bosjesmen, whom they are endeavouring to instruct in the precepts of Christianity, and at the same time to accustom to the habits of useful labour. From these, and indeed from the natives in general, the expedition received the most friendly and ready assistance. In crossing the Gariefs, or Orange river, the rapidity of the stream swept away one of the waggons, which, with the whole team of oxen, must inevitably have been lost, had not the savages, as they are called, on the opposite bank, perceiving the distressed situation of those belonging to it, plunged into the stream, and by their active exertions saved both waggon, team, and people from destruction.

After travelling about 300 hours from the Cape, or as we suppose about 800 English miles in the direction of N. E. or thereabouts, which would bring them within two degrees of the Tropic, they came to the capital of the Boetzuanas, containing about 1,500 houses, and 7,000 inhabitants. The name of the city is Likitow. So vast an assemblage of dwellings, exceeding the number of those in Cape Town, with a population equal, if not superior, excluding the slaves, makes it more than probable, that the inhabitants have not only attained a very considerable pitch of civilization, but it implies also a more than ordinary degree of industry in the cultivation of the arts, and the pursuits of agriculture. Surrounded by a barren country, and bordering to the northward on other tribes of people, remaining in a fixed and sedentary life, and deriving little or no support from commerce, we are entirely at a loss to conceive in what manner they contrive to subsist so great a multitude. The details of their political and domestic economy must furnish new and highly interesting matter to add to the history of savage nations. It would be equally unaccountable, that in the course of 160 years, no correct information of the Boetzuanas should have been obtained, if it did not occur to us, that no single discovery has been effected, nor any account of the southern angle of Africa been made public, except by occasional and foreign visitors. It may be further added, that the country within the limits of the colony has been better known and more travelled by Europeans or settlers within the last five years, than in the whole period of its colonization prior to the time we mention. At the capture of the colony, no part of the very extensive district of Graaff Reynet appeared in any of their charts, except Zwart Kop's Bay; nor were there then three men in the whole Cape, who could point out, with any degree of accuracy, where it was situated. This dreadful journey of a long month is now become familiar, and accomplished by a British officer, with two or three horses, in six days.

With regard to the Boetzuanas, their name, their numbers, their situation, and resourses, were all falsified in the accounts given by those who pretended to a knowledge of this nation.

The literary world will derive no small degree of gratification from the labours of the present expedition. Besides a variety, or perhaps a new species of Rhinoceros, no less than four animals of the Antelope and Bovine genus, hitherto undescribed, have been discovered, among which, one is stated to be allied to that singular animal the Gnoo, and another in some degree to the Hartebeest. And the fine arts will be enriched by the pencil of the very able artist who accompanied the expedition.

Notwithstanding the great distance that the Boetzuanas are removed from the Cape, they complained grievously of certain persons on the frontiers of the colony committing depredations on their cattle, and ill treating their people. They particularly mentioned a man of the name of Jan Blom, who with his gang had of late years very much infested them; and they concluded, naturally enough, that all the colonists were like Jan Blom; and of course they were at first guarded and distrustful of the present commission; which, however, by a residence nearly of a month, sufficiently convinced them that all Christians were not of the same description as Jan Blom and his gang.

Humanity shudders in contemplating the deplorable situation to which the bulk of the native inhabitants, and rightful owners, of this country, have been reduced by the arts and machinations of such lawless miscreants as these. To such are owing the numerous hordes of Bosjesmen, who, driven by imperious want to assail the habitations or the flocks of the colonists, are hunted down by the latter with more eagerness, and destroyed with less remorse, (for their destruction is the cause of triumph) than the vilest or most obnoxious beast of prey.

The natural disposition of the different tribes of Hottentots is mild, peaceable, and cheerful; and, by gentle usage, might be moulded into any shape. The habits of life in which they have been brought up, naturally incline them to a fondness of liberty, and render them impatient of confinement and restraint; but they are, perhaps, of all the people in the world who have been accustomed to a roving life, the easiest broken in to constant labour, and reconciled to a fixed abode. As a proof of this, we need only refer to the exertions of the missionaries, whose endeavours in this country have been crowned with better success, than perhaps in any other. Degraded as this people have stood in the page of history, and represented as they have generally been at the foot of the scale of rational animals, we are doubtful whether any nation or tribe of men, falling under the usual denomination of savage, are possessed with more natural endowments, or more apt to acquire those of art, than the Hottentots. We could enumerate various instances in support of this opinion, were it necessary; but they are now so well and so generally known, that such details were unnecessary.

List of New Publications.

INTEGRITY explained and recommended. In a sermon preached at the north meeting house in Salem, at an Association Lecture, Sept. 8, 1807. By Joseph Dana, D. D. one of the ministers of Ipswich. Salem. Pool & Pearly. 1808.

A Compendium of the History of all Nations, exhibiting a concise view of the origin, progress, decline and fall of the most considerable empires, kingdoms and states in the world, from the earliest times to the present period. Interspersed with a short account of the prevailing religions. Ornamented with a frontispiece, representing history conducting patriotism, fortitude and wisdom, to the temple of fame; personified by Generals Washington, Green and Hamilton; with three other plates, by D. Fraser. New York. Alsop, Brannon & Alsop.

A Dictionary of the English Language, compiled for the use of common schools in the United States. By N. Webster, Esq. G. F. Hopkins. New York.

Secret History; or the Horrors of St. Domingo. In a Series of Letters, by a Lady at Cape Francois, to Col. Burr, late vice president of the United States. Philadelphia, Bradford & Inskeep. 1808.

A Narrative of the Rise and Progress, with a brief explanation of several subjects, viz. Observations on the practice of the laying on of hands, the scriptural mode of celebrating the Lord's supper, &c. with remarks on Mr. Wm. Parkinson's past and present conduct, and observations on a pamphlet, entitled the new theological scheme detected. By Ebenezer Baptist Church. Also a letter to Mr. William Parkinson, with a dialogue affixed thereto, by John Inglesby. New York. Smith & Forman.

A Discourse before the Society for propagating the gospel among the Indians and others in North America, delivered Nov. 5, 1807. By Eliphalet Porter, D. D. pastor of the first church in Roxbury. 8vo. Boston. Munroe, Francis, & Parker.

A Discourse on the nature and design, the benefits and proper subjects of baptism. By the Rev. Robert Finley, A. M. minister of the gospel at Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Philadelphia. B. B. Hopkins & Co. 1808.

A Letter from the Hon. Timothy Pickering, a senator of the United States from the State of Massachusetts, exhibiting to his constituents a view of the imminent danger of an unnecessary and ruinous war. Addressed to His Excellency James Sullivan, Governor of the said State. Boston. Greenough & Stebbins. 1808.

NEW EDITIONS.

An Essay on the Spirit and Influence of the Reformation, by Luther: The work which obtained the prize on this question—Proposed by the National Institute of France in the public setting of the 15th Germinal, in the year X.—"What has been the influence of the Reformation by Luther on the political situation of the different states of Europe, and on the progress of knowledge? By C. Villars. Faithfully translated from the last Paris edition, by B. Lambert. Sold at No. 47, Cornhill, Boston.

The Works of Thomas a Kempis, in two vols. 12mo. $1,50. New-Bedford. Abraham Shearman, jun.

The Wanderer of Switzerland; and other Poems, by James Montgomery. Third American edition. To which is prefixed a Biographical Sketch of the Author's Life. 12mo. Boston. Belcher & Armstrong.

Obituary.

CHARACTER OF MRS. BIDWELL.

Died at Stockbridge, February last, Mrs. Mary Bidwell, consort of the Hon. Barnabas Bidwell, Attorney General of this state.

While reviewing the melancholy catalogue of those, who though slumbering in the tomb have left speaking records of their worth, we rarely observe a name so peculiarly calculated to excite the tenderest sympathies of the heart, and to awaken the reflections of the living, as the subject of these few remarks. When blooming youth perishes before our eyes, and decrepid age gently slides into the grave, the poignancy of grief yields in a measure to the reflection, that the loss of the former can be estimated only by a few acts of usefulness, while that of the latter proclaims the inevitable lot of nature. But when the vigour of life is torn from the full exercise of benevolence, when the tongue that spoke only to delight and to console, and the hand that was wont to scatter peace and blessings, and smooth the rugged paths of life, are stiffened by death, we can find no consolation, but what flows from a recollection of virtues, and a conviction that they now enjoy their reward. Mrs. Bidwell inherited great powers from nature, and her mind was enriched by judicious cultivation. In the various spheres in which she was destined to move, she exhibited strength of understanding, and suavity of heart. Elevated by feeling above those cold maxims, that chill the warmth of friendship by the affectation of dignity, the softness of her manners and easy conversation, unbosomed the most reserved, and fascinated the most phlegmatic. With commanding and versatile powers, she was qualified for every walk of

life, whether to sooth or enliven, to instruct or to reform. She could make the old contented with their years, and enable the young to borrow the wisdom of maturity. She could seize the affections of the former by indulging the gravity of age, and engage the love and respect of the latter by the amenity of her manners, and by inviting them to court pleasure in the form of improvement. But to know best, and, from veneration for worth, to yield her that respect and admiration her virtues deserved, we must view her in the scene of domestic retirement, in the circle of a family, of which she was the centre, displaying the love, duties, and attentions of a wife, mother, daughter, and friend. She sustained the tenderest of ties with the purest affection, watched over the infantile morals of her children with the warmest solicitude, and discharged the debt of gratitude to an aged parent with more than filial love and duty. With a soul glowing with benevolence, she largely distributed the favours fortune had showered upon her, and her disinterested munificence is gratefully remembered by many who experienced the kindness of her nature, and shared the sympathy of her heart. Her ardent, yet unobtrusive generosity was the emanation of a soul actuated by the purest views, free from the love of applause, and desirous only to relieve. Sedulous in her attentions to the deserving, she nourished every germ of merit by protection, animated industry by encouragement, and inspired indolence with ambition. Her virtues, however, were not limited by the circle that embraces only the relations of society, and acknowledge no higher obligation than friendship for our fellow creatures, and a theoretical reverence for that Being who gave us life: But to unspotted practical morality she united the purity of vital religion. With a deep sense of the truths of Christianity, she explained its precepts by practice, and inculcated the duties of life by an uninterrupted display of religious sincerity, and a constant flow of charitable affections. She was a Christian not merely in the correctness of understanding and truth of speculation, but in activity to obey the mandates of our Saviour, and to exemplify in a pure and moral life, the high and solemn duties he enjoins. By such an example all around her were instructed. With such an assemblage of virtues, it is needless to add, she died leaving few able to appreciate her virtues, but all deeply and sincerely lamenting her departure.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editors feel the highest respect for the ability, seriousness, and piety displayed in the communication of *Simeon*. They tender him their sincerest thanks for his diligent and patient labour in this performance, which must have been very advantageous to himself, and would be immediately introduced into the Panoplist, were not the length of it incompatible with the general design of such a publication. We are not, however, prepared, at present, to lay it aside.

Alpha is approved; and, with some abridgment, shall appear next month.

Thelesus is under consideration. We thank our Correspondent for his Extract concerning Rev. J. Brown of Haddington. Pastor in our next. Also the biographical Sketch of Rev. Dr. Mc. Whorter.

The Report of the Congregational Missionary Society is in type for next month: As are some obituary and other articles necessarily postponed.

The Editors are engaged in closing their accounts for the current year, and making their arrangements for the next. Agents and subscribers are requested to settle their accounts with the agent in Boston.

Erratum. P. 401, right hand column, line 17 from bottom, for "watch, *then*," read "watch *them*."